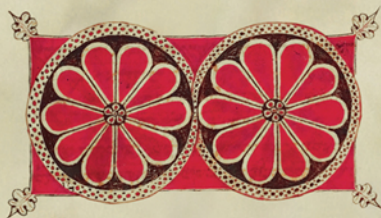




The Temporal Mechanics of the Fourth Gospel

A THEORY OF HERMENEUTICAL RELATIVITY
IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN



DOUGLAS ESTES

BRILL

The Temporal Mechanics of the Fourth Gospel

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A Theory of Hermeneutical Relativity in the
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Douglas Estes



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PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

for
my mother and my wife
sub specie aeternitatis

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PREFACE

When I began this work in 1999, I did not yet know the direction this work would take. I did know I was profoundly dissatisfied with what often passed for ‘time’ and ‘narrative’ in New Testament studies—it seemed in most cases that many of the exceptional works written in literary theory and especially historiography/philosophy of history never permeated the Biblical studies bubble. Not that I have done any of these works justice; but I do hope that future NT studies will consider the superb works of Arthur Danto, Fernand Braudel, Lubomír Doležal, David Lowenthal and so many others and not simply stop at the two or three ‘standards’ that we all seem to use in literary and historiographical studies of the NT. These standard works are, of course, extremely important, but they do represent only a small portion of issues raised in the disciplines tangential to Biblical studies.

I also did not know I would soon feel the need to start from scratch in my desire to find a paradigm for time that would best illuminate the ancient temporalities within the Fourth Gospel. This led to my decision to use a modern physics paradigm for time in an attempt to explain best these ancient Gospel temporalities. In light of this, I feel it best to start with a few preliminary statements:

This work is *not* a work of the physical sciences. I am *not* directly relating the Theory of Relativity (or any other scientific theory) to the Gospel of John. I am *not* saying there is a divine relationship or foreknowledge between the Gospel and any physical theory.

What I am doing is much more subtle than this—I am saying that the way we as people, readers, scientists, and theologians look at the world is a little more connected than some might want to believe. Modern chronology and modern absolute mechanics developed at the same time and the same place in the world; both developments changed our view of the world, but which was the chicken and which was the egg? Did the philosophy influence the science or the science determine the philosophy? We may raise the same question in our own era of revolutionary scientific advancement. Even though the Theory of Relativity is for all intents and purposes scientifically irrelevant in our everyday world, it is extremely relevant in its connection to how 21st century people experience their world.

I know first-hand the disdain that some who work in the hard sciences will feel about these statements. They will argue the Theory of Relativity is a mathematical conception that has nothing to do with an ancient Gospel. In a sense, they are right...but to be consistent, they must also admit that clocks, chronology, and even ancient methods of time-keeping (which were based around the physical theories of the world available at the time) have nothing to do with the Gospel, either. What does the displacement of water in a clepsydra (ancient water-clock) have to do with a Gospel? Nothing. The end result would be that nothing in the 'hard' sciences could ever inform other fields of study, and vice versa—but clearly this is not true because a simple clock (a thoroughly figurative mathematical concept completely unrelated to the 'real' world) informs everything in the modern world. Either there is a wall where knowledge cannot permeate other worlds, or there isn't.

To this end, I have not tried to make my work 'scientific'—at least in the physical sciences sense. I use no mathematical equations (the base of the Theory of Relativity); instead, I have tried to describe theoretical physical phenomena using as simple words as possible while trying to remain as accurate as possible. The result is a work containing statements that will lack some degree of precision when dealing with the scientific concepts. In those situations, I humbly refer you to works specifically on the physical sciences.

I remember sitting in an advanced class on physical chemistry in my undergraduate studies and hearing the professor go on and on about ideas much more 'philosophical' than 'scientific.' It was, in my mind at the time, an unwanted interruption into the 'real world' of hard science—what did those ideas have to do with anything? Everything.

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Special thanks to the faculty and staff at the Theology department at Nottingham, all of whom graciously provided aid during my time there. In addition, thanks to Professor John Morehan in the Humanities Department for making my study possible in several key ways. Credit goes to my co-laborers Dr Jeya Ganeshalingam and Dr Adonis Vidu.

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Finally, the greatest debt of gratitude goes to my wonderful, beautiful wife Noël, as well as our son, Wyatt. Nawapenda na barikiwa.

1 October 2007

ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	Anchor Bible Commentary
ABR	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
ACNT	Augsburg Commentaries on the New Testament
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AHR	<i>American Historical Review</i>
AJP	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
AJS	<i>American Journal of Sociology</i>
AJT	<i>American Journal of Theology</i>
AL	<i>American Literature</i>
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
AP	<i>Annalen der Physik</i>
ARP	<i>Annual Review of Psychology</i>
AT	<i>Anthropology Today</i>
AthR	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
AUS	American University Studies
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
BDAG	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature</i>
BIS	Biblical Interpretation Series
BR	<i>Biblical Research</i>
Bsac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BT	<i>Bible Translator</i>
BU	Biblische Untersuchungen
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CHR	<i>Canadian Historical Review</i>
CK	<i>Common Knowledge</i>
CL	<i>Comparative Literature</i>
CMMP	Cambridge Monographs on Mathematical Physics
ConBNT	Coniectanea Biblica: New Testament Series
CovQ	<i>Covenant Quarterly</i>
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
CSL	Current Studies in Linguistics

<i>CW</i>	<i>Classical World</i>
<i>EDNT</i>	<i>Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
<i>EL</i>	<i>European Legacy</i>
<i>ES</i>	<i>English Studies</i>
<i>EUS</i>	European University Studies
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
<i>GRLSS</i>	Garland Reference Library of Social Science
<i>HEI</i>	<i>History of European Ideas</i>
<i>HolNTCS</i>	Holman New Testament Commentary Series
<i>HPT</i>	<i>History of Political Thought</i>
<i>HSCP</i>	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
<i>HT</i>	<i>History and Theory</i>
<i>HTB</i>	<i>History and Theory Beiheft</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>IBS</i>	<i>Irish Biblical Studies</i>
<i>IPQ</i>	<i>International Philosophical Quarterly</i>
<i>ISMP</i>	International Series of Monographs on Physics
<i>JAH</i>	<i>Journal of American History</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JCE</i>	<i>Journal of Contemporary Ethnography</i>
<i>JEP: LMC</i>	<i>Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, & Cognition</i>
<i>JES</i>	<i>Journal of European Studies</i>
<i>JH</i>	<i>Jewish History</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JLS</i>	<i>Journal of Literary Semantics</i>
<i>JMH</i>	<i>Journal of Medieval History</i>
<i>JML</i>	<i>Journal of Memory and Language</i>
<i>JNT</i>	<i>Journal of Narrative Technique</i>
<i>JP</i>	<i>Journal of Philosophy</i>
<i>JPL</i>	<i>Journal of Philosophical Logic</i>
<i>JPr</i>	<i>Journal of Pragmatics</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSNTSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>K-S</i>	<i>Kant-Studien</i>
<i>LCL</i>	Loeb Classical Library

LCS	Lang Classical Studies
<i>LL</i>	<i>Language and Literature</i>
LSCP	London Studies in Classical Philology
MGC	Moody Gospel Commentary
<i>MLN</i>	<i>Modern Language Notes</i>
<i>MLQ</i>	<i>Modern Language Quarterly</i>
MNTC	Moffatt New Testament Commentary
<i>MQ</i>	<i>Midwest Quarterly</i>
NATOSS 2: MPC	NATO Science Series II: Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry
<i>NCF</i>	<i>Nineteenth-Century Fiction</i>
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
<i>NLH</i>	<i>New Literary History</i>
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTR	New Testament Readings
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies
ÖTKNT	Ökumenischer Taschenbuchkommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>PPR</i>	<i>Philosophy and Phenomenological Research</i>
<i>PQ</i>	<i>Philosophical Quarterly</i>
<i>PRev</i>	<i>Philosophical Review</i>
<i>PSBSup</i>	<i>Princeton Seminary Bulletin Supplementary</i>
<i>PSci</i>	<i>Psychological Science</i>
<i>PT</i>	<i>Poetics Today</i>
<i>RelS</i>	<i>Religious Studies</i>
<i>RelSB</i>	<i>Religious Studies Bulletin</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
<i>RH</i>	<i>Rethinking History</i>
<i>RMP</i>	<i>Reviews of Modern Physics</i>
<i>RN</i>	<i>Romance Notes</i>
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament
<i>RRev</i>	<i>Romanic Review</i>
<i>SAP</i>	<i>Studia Anglica Posnamiensia</i>
SBib	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien

SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
<i>SE</i>	<i>Studia Evangelica</i>
SHR	Studies in the History of Religions
<i>ST</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
<i>SLJ</i>	<i>Southern Literary Journal</i>
SNTS	Society for New Testament Studies
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
<i>SNTSU</i>	<i>Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt</i>
<i>SPQ</i>	<i>Social Psychology Quarterly</i>
<i>SSF</i>	<i>Studies in Short Fiction</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
SPNPT	Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition
<i>SVTQ</i>	<i>St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly</i>
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association (1974–)</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
<i>TEC</i>	<i>The Eighteenth Century</i>
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>TJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
<i>TPAPA</i>	<i>Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association</i>
<i>TSL</i>	<i>Texas Studies in Language and Literature</i>
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>YFS</i>	<i>Yale French Studies</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZPK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik</i>
ZSNT	Zacchaeus Studies: New Testament

CHAPTER ONE

PROLEGOMENA

Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in.

—Henry David Thoreau

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Once upon a time writers of ancient narratives shaped and molded the seasons and moments. Within their works, these writers invoked a temporal fantasia—an orchestrated plurality of temporality within the singularity of narrative design. As city-states rose and fell, nations burgeoned and empires flourished, classical writers began to discern connections between the natural and the temporal; and in their stories, they modeled time as a property of the cosmos but still according to their wishes. As the centuries continued, thinkers in the Western world began to divine several noteworthy temporalities through experience, through meditation, and through reason. Each of these temporalities showed great promise, and soon schools and partisans arose to advocate their individual times. Before long medieval writers borrowed one or more of these temporalities and created narratives that were malleable pastiches of one or more of these temporal forms. As empires dwindled, the reign of the clock commenced—now the world could measure and agree on time. Writers stopped shaping time to life and started shaping life to time. A series of revolutions in the physical sciences led to the triumph of one type of temporality hailed for its modern sense of rationalism, clarity, and demonstrability by empirical method. Quickly the appeal and strength of this modern temporality overwhelmed all other temporal modes, and soon authors willingly complied with the new temporal mandate. The modern world had come to assume that time was of a few certain properties—only in the last few decades has a new and profound revolution in the physical sciences challenged this dominion and once again brought into question the mechanics of time.

The Fourth Gospel is an ancient narrative with a rather curious and awkward sense of time. Even very early in the history of Christianity

people noticed that the presentation of the life of Jesus in the Gospel of John differed noticeably from the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark and Luke. By comparison, the Fourth Gospel confronted readers with a gospel that appeared to be temporally disorganized or confused. How many years did Jesus minister publicly? Did Jesus cleanse the temple at the beginning or end of his public ministry? Debates and discussions over these issues and more ensued for more than a thousand years, with no clear solution forthcoming. Yet up until the present day, almost all the focus has been on fitting the seemingly disparate gospel chronologies into a harmonious whole or rejecting the issue altogether in order to bracket out a Johannine *καῖρός* of time. As a result, scholars and critics have spent little time coming to terms with the time of the Gospel of John *in its individual context*.

Our study of the Fourth Gospel will spotlight three broad areas: narrative, time, and Gospel. Narrative is the essence of theology; we cannot understand God without understanding texts.¹ Time is the essence of life; we cannot discern relationships without discerning time. Finally, gospel is the essence of Christianity; we cannot know this faith without knowing this Gospel.² I selected these three areas because each of these areas is an indivisible aspect of the greater puzzle. Time and narrative overshadow the gospel; and while there is an intrinsic quality to narrative that transcends time, temporality transcends style, genre, and even narrative itself. Therefore, we must come to terms with the question of time in John. *Hence the goal of this book is to investigate the manner in which time functions in the narrative of the Fourth Gospel.* Ultimately, our study is a hermeneutical one, intended to examine alternatives and expose assumptions for readers of the Gospel.

We have four distinct goals—one primary and three secondary. First, we will explore the temporal mechanics of the Fourth Gospel by focusing on the time *of* the text rather than the time *in* the text. In other words, we are solely concerned with the manner in which the Gospel uses and develops time to its narrative end. This temporal-configurational aspect is what we will call the *temporal mechanics* of narrative. What we will not consider is notions of time in the text: theories of divine temporality,

¹ D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 82; and cf. Rom 1.

² Francis Watson, *Text and Truth: Redefining Biblical Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 1; and Wesley A. Kort, *Story, Text, and Scripture: Literary Interests in Biblical Narrative* (University Park: PSU, 1988), 8.

Jesus' view of time, eschatology, or the *καίρός/χρόνος* debate. Second, we will approach the Gospel generally through narrative criticism, but we will not remain limited to any one constricting perception of literary method.³ Third, we will attempt to reclaim an ancient understanding of temporality in narrative by referencing a radically different paradigm for temporality never before attempted in this capacity. Finally, we will conclude our expedition into the Gospel narrative by challenging many implicit assumptions held within modern Gospel studies.

The juxtaposition of time and narrative proved to be an intriguing starting place to consider the Fourth Gospel—the concern over narrative time predates the Gospel and we can trace it at least to Horace (65–8 BC).⁴ However, early on in this study I became increasingly dissatisfied with the two concepts of ‘time’ and ‘narrative’ as critics have come to use them in the realm of Biblical studies. Narrative criticism was in several ways severely limited as a method, and narrative critics regularly made many unfounded assumptions about time and temporality. In fact, most studies of narrative time in both the Biblical and literary worlds are so mired in modern, quasi-Newtonian and quasi-Kantian views of time as to be practically useless for contextual studies of ancient, medieval, or postmodern narratives. I came to the conclusion that before I could investigate the Fourth Gospel, it was necessary *to transcend simple definitions and reimagine the theory and function of narrative and time*.

Our study will make several original contributions to the study of the Fourth Gospel, as well as the discipline of Biblical studies. It will present a fresh and innovative understanding of the temporality of John, resulting in critical implications not only to Johannine research, such as the relationship between the Johannine community and the rest of the early church, but also to early Christianity, such as the interpretation of ancient Gospels, the history of the early church, and the quest for the historical Jesus, to name but a few. What is more, this work will make a unique contribution to Biblical hermeneutics in its

³ Perhaps we can approach a “grand narratology”—a narratology marshalling diverse fields and thinkers—as envisioned by Paul Ricoeur, in contrast to the typical, overly synchronic and Structuralist narratology generally employed in Biblical studies; see Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (vol. 2; trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1984), 156.

⁴ Brian Richardson, *Narrative Dynamics: Essays on Time, Plot, Closure, and Frames* (Columbus: OSU, 2002), 1.

approach to time and narrative.⁵ Not satisfied to apply a traditional view of time or a typical Structuralist narratology, I have attempted to lay a great deal of ‘new ground’ in temporality and narrative theory for Biblical studies—the application of a ‘scientific’ paradigm of time to an ancient narrative in order to illuminate forgotten temporalities and expose modern assumptions has never before been attempted with the Fourth Gospel.⁶ As a result, we will fill in several notable gaps within Johannine and Biblical research. Finally, in order to accomplish our task we must consider the Fourth Gospel as a whole, honing in on selected passages through proofs and case studies, to understand best its temporal mechanics.

1.2. THE FOURTH GOSPEL AS NARRATIVE LITERATURE

One inalienable fact about the collection of documents we commonly refer to in the English language as the ‘Bible’ is that it is literature. At the outset, such a statement may appear threatening to members of a community of faith who revere the Bible as direct, word-for-word revelation from God, or circumspect to members of a community unfamiliar with Western standards and ideologies.⁷ These sentiments are often the result of the historical, literary or theological implications or motivations entailed in describing the Bible as literature. To a certain degree, this discussion is nothing new. An often-cited example from antiquity is that of Augustine (AD 354–430), who upon initial examination of the Biblical texts was dismayed at their seemingly poor literary quality.⁸ Augustine’s quandary not only highlights the fact that there has been a discussion about the Bible as literature for at least sixteen hundred years, but also that people have viewed the Bible *as* literature for at

⁵ Even though hermeneutical/theoretical studies of the Fourth Gospel are somewhat uncommon, they are not without precedent; consider Derek Tovey, *Narrative Art and Act in the Fourth Gospel* (JSNTSup 151; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997); Patrick Chatelion Counet, *John, A Postmodern Gospel: Introduction to Deconstructive Exegesis Applied to the Fourth Gospel* (BIS 44; Leiden: Brill, 2000); and Tom Thatcher, *The Riddles of Jesus in John: A Study in Tradition and Folklore* (SBLMS 53; Atlanta: SBL, 2000).

⁶ While I will focus on a hermeneutical approach to the Fourth Gospel using a modern physics paradigm for time, my approach is by no means a technical treatise; advanced scientific concepts and jargon will be kept to an absolute minimum while still remaining as accurate and up-to-date as possible; cf. Michael Heller, “Cosmological Singularity and the Creation of the Universe,” *Zygon* 35:3 (2000): 678.

⁷ Cf. T. R. Wright, *Theology and Literature* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 41.

⁸ Augustine *Confessions* 3.5.

least as many years. Therefore, ‘modern’ attempts to view the Bible as literature are truly not modern at all.

Ironically, it is easier to defend the Bible as literature than it is actually to define ‘literature.’ People use and continue to use the word to categorize a vast number of texts from various eras, areas, locales and authors. Furthermore, the Bible is only one of a great number of texts about which there have been debates as to whether or not they were literature. This is due in large part to the nebulous nature of the term ‘literature.’ Terry Eagleton maintains that any attempt to define literature objectively is destined to fail.⁹ However, as Eagleton hints in his introduction to literary theory, it is arguably better suited to define literature functionally rather than ontologically.¹⁰ A functional approach to the nature of literature serves as a better course for labeling the Bible as literature.

One reason the Bible functions as literature is that its authors wrote within literary genres and used literary devices. Quite simply, these writers wrote with “literary awareness.”¹¹ Not only did the Psalmist knowingly use Hebrew poetry as a literary tool for communication, so too did the Gospels writers follow a simple Aristotelian beginning-middle-end sequence in the composition of the plot of each of the four Gospels.¹² Similar to other works of literature, the Bible contains copious examples of the use of simile, hyperbole, irony, characterization, chiasmus, foreshadowing, symbolism and other literary devices. As a result, people recognized the texts that comprise the Bible as literature from the time of the early church. For example, while Augustine initially bemoaned the poor literary quality of the Bible, he nonetheless accepted it *as* literature—albeit poor in quality. In time, however, Augustine began

⁹ Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 9.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹¹ Leland Ryken, “Bible as Literature,” in *Foundations for Biblical Interpretation* (ed. David S. Dockery, Kenneth A. Matthews and Robert B. Sloan; Nashville: B&H, 1994), 56.

¹² This is not to say that the Gospel writers necessarily utilized Aristotle’s ideas on plot development in the creation of the Gospels. What the Gospel writers surely did do, however, is recognize the effectiveness of plot development that entails a story with clear beginning, middle, and end segments—Aristotle (384–322 BC) was merely one of the first literary theorists in the ancient world to address this issue. The possibility of the Evangelists’ awareness of Aristotle’s work is another matter; Aristotle pre-dates the Evangelists by more than three centuries and the increasing Hellenization of Palestine by the 1st century AD would by no means prevent their familiarity with his work, or more likely, their familiarity with his (recognized or not) impact upon ancient literary styles. Scholars still laud Aristotle’s work in this area to this day; see Aristotle, *Poetics* (trans. Stephan Halliwell; LCL 199; Cambridge: Harvard University, 1999).

to discern a distinct literary eloquence emanating from the pages of the Bible, and sought to perform detailed rhetorical analyses on the texts as one would perform on classical Greco-Roman writing.¹³

A second reason the Bible functions as literature is that it has the literary power to challenge and transform readers. Just as Albert Camus' *The Stranger* eerily compels one to pause and consider the emptiness of existence and Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* moves one to desire a true touch of divinity, so too does the Bible stimulate the reader to think, question, and decide. Perhaps no text since the writing of the Biblical book of Job has captured the quintessential struggle of a man against an unfriendly universe, with truth and faith as the man's only allies. The literary styles of the texts included in the Bible are equal to any of the works in the Western Canon in their ability to challenge the reader to attain new heights.

Maintaining the Bible is literature in no way suggests the Bible is fictional or non-theological. Any cursory glance at undergraduate English Literature course syllabi reveals that literature is not constrained by such objective, and ultimately ontological, descriptors. In such a course, it is not uncommon to see the non-fictional essays of Francis Bacon or the theological works of John Donne or John Bunyan.¹⁴ The Bible may be historical and theological, yet still function as literature—and be appreciated and analyzed accordingly. Ultimately, to treat the Bible as literature is in no way “to refuse to take it seriously as a revelation of God's action in history.”¹⁵ As a result of the unique form of the Bible—it is, after all, literature that comprises many variegated literary texts into a whole—a more accurate moniker might be that the Bible is actually an “anthology of literature.”¹⁶ Within this anthology of literature lie the Gospels. These Gospels have functioned as literature for the last two millennia in their power and ability to challenge and transform readers. Based upon this criterion alone, there seems no more promising text for literary analysis than the Gospels.¹⁷

Not only do the texts of the four canonical Gospels function as literature, each of these works is a certain type of literary text: each

¹³ Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* 4.6–7.

¹⁴ Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, 1.

¹⁵ Wright, *Theology and Literature*, 41.

¹⁶ As Ryken points out, “even the word ‘Bible’ suggests this, since it means simply ‘little books’”; see Ryken, “Bible as Literature,” 57.

¹⁷ Frank Kermode, *The Genesis of Secrecy: On the Interpretation of Narrative* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1979), ix.

is a narrative. Unlike literature, which we must view primarily from a functional point of view, narrative is an objective, ontological description of the Gospels. The Gospels are narratives that function as literature, or more simply, narrative literature. Unlike genre, which is a categorical descriptor of texts, narrative is a “mode of discourse.”¹⁸ If one were to rewrite the Fourth Gospel as an epic poem, or draw it event-by-event in the panels of a comic book, or film it as a docudrama with a Hollywood producer, the genre of the Gospel would change, but the narrative itself would remain the same—“this transposability of the story is the strongest reason for arguing that narratives are indeed structures independent of any medium.”¹⁹

Given the compositional fluidity of narrative, we may find examples of narratives in virtually every category, genre or medium of communication. Narratives occupy a foundational building block of human existence in that there is a deep-seated, innate human need for narrative. Children reflect this need with the desire to hear stories—even the same stories—multiple times. As adults, narratives populate every aspect of daily life: for example, reading the newspaper, watching the television, chatting about work and school, and attending sporting events. Even in sleep, dreams narrate stories to satisfy this basic of human needs. From a sociological perspective, “narrative is the primary way through which humans organize their experiences into temporally meaningful episodes.”²⁰ This characteristic of narratives led Roland Barthes to equate narrative with life itself, describing it as “international, transhistorical, transcultural.”²¹ Reynolds Price prioritizes narrative as second only to food and water, and more important than love or shelter for human existence.²² Furthermore, we will find narrative texts in virtually every culture of the world.²³ In an exploration of the sociological implications of narrative, individuals from broad geographical and socio-economic backgrounds all possess a fundamental, intuitional understanding of

¹⁸ Mieke Bal, *On Story-Telling: Essays in Narratology* (Sonoma: Polebridge, 1994), 1.

¹⁹ Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1978), 20.

²⁰ Laurel Richardson, “Narrative and Sociology,” *JCE* 19 (1990): 118.

²¹ Roland Barthes, “An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative,” *NLH* 6:4 (1975): 237.

²² Reynolds Price, *A Palpable God* (New York: Atheneum, 1978), 3.

²³ Hayden White, “The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality,” in *On Narrative* (ed. W. J. T. Mitchell; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1981), 2.

narrative.²⁴ Indeed, the “ubiquity of narrative” connects one person or one group to the next, especially when the people or groups are separated by time and space.²⁵ Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the narratives of the canonical Gospels have challenged and transformed readers from all walks of life for the last two millennia.²⁶

In modern thought, narrative has taken on a variety of nuanced meanings.²⁷ A broad, simple definition of narrative is “story.”²⁸ While these terms are not entirely synonymous, a narrative acts as a story for almost all intents and purposes: similar to a story, a narrative chronicles a series of events or actions.²⁹ Therefore, the Fourth Gospel is a narrative as it recounts the life of Jesus through the eyes of the Beloved Disciple. In the same way, the movie *Schindler’s List*, Wagner’s *Ring of the Nibelung* opera, the Broadway musical *The Pirates of Penzance*, the American comic book *The Amazing Spiderman*, and the Christmas carol “The First Noël” are all narratives as they each tell a story by narrating a sequence of events. In contrast, M. C. Escher’s drawings, Ansel Adams’ photographs, and Paul Gauguin’s paintings are not narratives; nor are the 23rd Psalm or the hymn “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee.”³⁰ Simply put, the first set of examples clearly narrates a series of events connected by both chronology and causality, whereas the second set of examples does not.

²⁴ Gerald Prince, “Narrative Analysis and Narratology,” *NLH* 13:2 (1982): 179.

²⁵ Kort, *Story, Text, and Scripture*, 8–9.

²⁶ Cf. Arthur Asa Berger, *Narratives in Popular Culture, Media, and Everyday Life* (London: Sage, 1997), x.

²⁷ The various uses of the term have caused some confusion, especially for individuals unaware of literary and philosophical technicalities; while I will define and utilize the term, ‘narrative,’ in merely one specific manner, a foundational discussion of multiple meanings may be found in Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (trans. Jane E. Lewin; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), 25–9.

²⁸ See Ryken, “Bible as Literature,” 61; and Mark Allan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 23.

²⁹ Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan bridges the gap between a simple and more technical definition of narrative by defining narrative as a “succession of events”; see Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London: Routledge, 1994), 2; and Carlota S. Smith, “The Domain of Tense,” in *The Syntax of Time* (ed. Jacqueline Guéron and Jacqueline Lecarme; CSL 37; Cambridge: MIT, 2004), 604.

³⁰ For example, see Berger, *Narratives*, 6; Arthur C. Danto, *Narration and Knowledge: Including the Integral Text of Analytical Philosophy of History* (New York: Columbia University, 1985), 120; Robert Scholes, “Language, Narrative, and Anti-Narrative,” in *On Narrative* (ed. W. J. T. Mitchell; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1981), 205; and Mary C. Olson, “Genesis and Narratology: The Challenge of Medieval Illustrated Texts,” *Mosaic* 31:1 (1998): 14.

Gerald Prince offers a more precise definition that we will use as a general principle for the remainder of this book: narrative is “the representation of real or fictive situations and events in a time sequence.”³¹ Within this definition, the crucial phrase is *time sequence*. The existence of a temporal sequence is what differentiates a narrative from a non-narrative;³² a narrative is temporally dynamic whereas a non-narrative is temporally static. Temporality, then, is the foundation on which we can build a narrative.³³ However, one of the conceptions we will wrestle most with is the meaning and function of a *time sequence* in narrative.

For example, if we were to ‘read’ the story of the life of an oak tree, the time sequence might simply be ‘acorn—sapling—oak.’ In contrast, the time sequences of most narratives are far more complex. This includes the Fourth Gospel, a narrative with a very high degree of temporal complexity. On the other hand, a photograph of the

³¹ Prince, “Narrative Analysis and Narratology,” 179.

³² While some theorists maintain that causality is an equally important element as chronology in narratives (e.g. Claude Bremond, “The Logic of Narrative Possibilities,” *NLH* 11:3 (1980): 390), postmodern literary examples make clear that while causality is significant, it is not essential to narrative in the way a temporal sequence is essential (cf. Ruth Ronen, “Paradigm Shift in Plot Models: An Outline of the History of Narratology,” *PT* 11:4 (1990): 819). Furthermore, causality and plot are a function of the time sequence in the text, and for this reason, it is impossible to have causality or plot without temporal modulation—yet it is possible to have a temporal sequence without plot or apparent causality; see Gerald Prince, *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative* (Berlin: Mouton, 1982), 1–4.

³³ Numerous theorists from a variety of fields define narrative as a function of time; see Paul Ricoeur, “Narrative Time,” in *On Narrative* (ed. W. J. T. Mitchell; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1981), 165–6; Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 21; Tzvetan Todorov, *Introduction to Poetics* (trans. Richard Howard; Sussex: Harvester, 1981), 41–3; Prince, *Narratology*, 1; Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 18–9; Kort, *Story, Text, and Scripture*, 16; Meir Sternberg, “Telling in Time (I): Chronology and Narrative Theory,” *PT* 11:4 (1990): 901; Susana Onega, ed., *Narratology: An Introduction* (London: Longman, 1996), 3; Berger, *Narratives*, 4; Bremond, “Logic,” 390; Hans Meyerhoff, *Time in Literature* (Berkeley: University of California, 1960), 3; Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth, *Sequel to History: Postmodernism and the Crisis of Representational Time* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1992), 11; Ursula K. Heise, *Chronoschisms: Time, Narrative and Postmodernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1997), 47; Ronen, “Paradigm Shift,” 819; Marie-Laure Ryan, “The Modal Structures of Narrative Universes,” *PT* 6:4 (1985): 717; Hans Kellner, “Narrativity in History: Post-Structuralism and Since,” *HTB* 6 26:4 (1987): 29; Jan Miel, “Temporal Form in the Novel,” *MLN* 84:6 (1969): 916; Philippe Carrard, “Narrative and Historiography: Writing the France of the Occupation,” *Style* 34:2 (2000): 245; Michel Mathieu-Colas, “Frontières de la narratologie,” *Poétique* 65 (1986): 107; Eric S. Rabkin, *Narrative Suspense: “When Slim Turned Sideways...”* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1973), 73; Smith, “Domain of Tense,” 603–4; Larry J. Griffin, “Narrative, Event-Structure Analysis, and Causal Interpretation in Historical Sociology,” *AJS* 98:5 (1993): 1099; Donald N. McCloskey, “History, Differential Equations, and the Problem of Narration,” *HT* 30:1 (1991): 21; and Olson, “Genesis and Narratology,” 1.

same oak tree would not comprise a temporal sequence, but merely one moment in time—and therefore would not constitute a narrative. However, if we juxtapose the same photograph of the oak with two other photographs of an acorn and a sapling, the most rudimentary of narrative develops—a narrative of the life of an oak tree. In the same way, the 23rd Psalm is a theological ‘snapshot’—a non-narrative in which the Psalmist expresses hope in God’s immutable promises even in the midst of despair.

1.3. METHOD

As I demonstrated above, the Fourth Gospel is clearly a narrative that functions as literature. The Fourth Gospel is also a narrative composed of complex temporalities and temporally situated in an ancient world context in the midst of the Christ/early Christian community meta-narrative. Therefore, we will explore the temporal mechanics of the Fourth Gospel by investigating the narrative text of the Gospel in order to discern its temporal design, purpose, and position. We will conduct this narrative-temporal analysis within the very broad arena of narrative criticism. Narrative criticism, which we will discuss in more detail below, is one of several 20th century literary-critical approaches that evolved from a grafting of modern literary theory into Biblical studies. Due to uneven grafting techniques, narrative criticism exists only in the world of Biblical studies, and has become a much more fuzzy term than its literary antecedents.³⁴ As a result, I will broadly employ contemporary literary narratology as the primary methodological tool within the realm of narrative criticism. I will supplement this with a variety of critical tools including those from the study of historiography, linguistics, anthropology and general literary theory.

1.3.1. *Literary Origins of Narrative Criticism*

While Biblical narrative criticism arose primarily from elements of 20th century literary theory, the interest in and analysis of narrative originated in antiquity.³⁵ Arguably, the *Poetics* of Aristotle (384–322 BC)

³⁴ Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 19; and cf. Stephen D. Moore, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels: The Theoretical Challenge* (New Haven: Yale University, 1989), 51.

³⁵ Berger, *Narratives*, 2.

was the first work to detail a theory of narrative analysis.³⁶ Written more than twenty-five hundred years ago, *Poetics* is still one of the most important literary theories of narrative; it has set the tone for much of modern literary theory.³⁷ Prior to the advent of the 20th century, modern literary studies were primarily positivistic in nature. Literary positivism was especially indicative of the theories of the years immediately preceding the 20th century; these theories were

largely based on the genetic approach; critics, or rather scholars, concentrated their energies on uncovering the sources and genesis of particular works, and the role of biography, history and history of ideas in these genetic studies obviously reduced the importance of literature itself in literary scholarship. The study of literature had become little more than a loose aggregate of philosophy, history, psychology, aesthetics, ethnography, sociology, and so on.³⁸

However, it was not until the 20th century that interests in narratives would strike a chord in the area of Biblical studies.

The development of modern literary theory has been by no means a simple, straightforward process. Recent trends in the study of literature have witnessed the push for complete theoretical and methodological autonomy: no longer satisfied to be a subset of linguistics, aesthetics, philology, or philosophy, literary theorists have pushed for freedom, giving rise to a specialized discipline. Unfortunately, this has contributed to methodological mayhem, as there are few distinguishing markers to identify one theory from the next. Modern literary theory "is a domain of conscious paradox which eschews reductive and mechanistic explanations, and it looks very odd by comparison not just with chemistry or physics, but with academic psychology, say, or linguistics, or philosophical logic."³⁹ Since the fragmentation of theories and methodologies has eliminated the possibility of a simple synopsis, I will briefly address only those theories that have significantly impacted the development of

³⁶ Onega, *Narratology*, 1.

³⁷ Todorov, *Introduction to Poetics*, xxiii; and L. B. Cebik, "Understanding Narrative Theory," *HTB* 25 (1986): 64.

³⁸ Ann Jefferson, "Russian Formalism," in *Modern Literary Theory: A Comparative Introduction* (ed. Ann Jefferson and David Robey; London: B. T. Batsford, 1993), 26.

³⁹ Leonard Jackson, *The Poverty of Structuralism: Literature and Structuralist Theory* (London: Longman, 1991), 1.

narrative criticism.⁴⁰ Furthermore, for the sake of brevity, we will examine those theories and their implications in chronological order.⁴¹

1.3.1.1. *Russian Formalism*

Viktor Shklovsky's essay on Futurist poetry, "The Resurrection of the Word," published in 1914,⁴² was arguably the inaugural excursion into the literary realm of Russian Formalism. Its name coined by its opponents, Russian Formalism was not so much concerned with formality as with the characteristics and devices of literature. The Formalists defined literature as a language text that differed from practical, mundane language texts; these literary texts invoked language that was unfamiliar in order to alter the reader's perception.⁴³ Russian Formalists followed Aristotle in their emphasis on plot; however, unlike Aristotle, Formalists argued that plot was non-mimetic, thereby rendering its defamiliarization effect on the reader. Furthermore, the Formalists' interest in the plot and narrative led them to distinguish between plot, *sjuzhet*, the literary device and medium, and story, *fabula*, the raw material from which plot is fashioned.⁴⁴

Aside from Shklovsky, a prominent figure in the *Opojaz* circle, Russian Formalism owes most of its influence to Roman Jakobson, a member of the Moscow Linguistic Circle, and to Boris Tomashevsky and Vladimir Propp, early narrative theorists.⁴⁵ By 1924, however,

⁴⁰ Other theories, such as semiotics, deconstructionism, moral formalism, phenomenology, interpretive communities and reader-response theories, feminist, psychoanalytic, and Marxist theories and the plethora of other post-Structuralist theories, have impacted Biblical narrative criticism, but arguably less than Russian Formalism, New Criticism, and Structuralism.

⁴¹ Even though Russian Formalism chronologically predates all of the theories mentioned here, its primary impact was not felt in the West until the latter half of the 20th century; see Raman Selden, Peter Widdowson, and Peter Brooker, *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory* (4th ed.; London: Prentice Hall, 1997), 3.

⁴² Viktor Shklovsky, "The Resurrection of the Word," in *Russian Formalism: A Collection of Articles and Texts in Translation* (ed. Stephen Bann and John E. Bowl; New York: Barnes & Noble, 1973), 41–7.

⁴³ See Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," in *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays* (ed. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis; Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1965), 3–24.

⁴⁴ Selden, Widdowson, and Brooker, *Reader's Guide*, 35–6.

⁴⁵ Tomashevsky's plot theories, such as his demarcation of textual "motifs," is a striking part of certain areas of narratology—especially Seymour Chatman's *Story and Discourse*; see Boris Tomashevsky, "Thematics," in *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays* (ed. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis; Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1965), 61–98. Propp's structural analysis of the plot devices of Russian fairy tales is a direct

Russian Formalism was under heavy attack from both literary theorists as well as the Communist climate of Russia.⁴⁶ Jakobson left Russia, and in 1926, assisted in establishing the Prague Linguistic Circle in the country known today as the Czech Republic. It was here that he and Yury Tynyanov began to write of the plot as a structure within a system. With the rise of Nazi influence, Jakobson again emigrated, this time to the United States, where he would impact the latter half of the literary movement known as New Criticism, widening the literary base for Structuralism.

1.3.1.2. *New Criticism*

In light of the developments of Russian Formalism, there are many striking similarities between New Criticism and Formalist theory. Both schools of theory served as a reaction to the malaise inflicting literary theory from the aesthetics of pre-20th century Romanticism, and both attempted to usher in an empirical, scientific approach to reading texts. Cambridge critic I. A. Richards initiated New Criticism in 1924 with the publication of his revolutionary *Principles of Literary Criticism*,⁴⁷ which would continue to impact literary studies for the next fifty years.⁴⁸ As a result of the fusion in literary studies of Richard's theories and the thoughts of T. S. Eliot, New Criticism became the dominant literary force of the English-speaking world in the 1940s and 1950s.⁴⁹

Advocates of the Anglo-American New Criticism strongly emphasized the role of the text rather than the author or reader; for a New Critic, the text—nothing more, nothing less—was to be investigated through objective, empirical criticism.⁵⁰ American New Critics such as John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate and Cleanth Brooks, members

precursor of Structuralist narratology; see Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale* (trans. Laurence Scott; Austin: University of Texas, 1986).

⁴⁶ For one of the primary antagonists on both fronts, see Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution* (trans. Rose Strunsky; New York: International, 1925).

⁴⁷ I. A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1961).

⁴⁸ Unlike Russian Formalism, New Criticism received its name from a book published much later by American John Crowe Ransom; see John Crowe Ransom, *The New Criticism* (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1941).

⁴⁹ David Robey, "Anglo-American New Criticism," in *Modern Literary Theory: A Comparative Introduction* (ed. Ann Jefferson and David Robey; London: B. T. Batsford, 1993), 26.

⁵⁰ Selden, Widdowson, and Brooker, *Reader's Guide*, 13–4.

of the Southern Agrarians literary circle,⁵¹ promulgated the reverence for the literary text by distancing the text from its historical context. Furthermore, they maintained that the organic nature of texts empowered literature to affect human ideologies, emotions, and lives. Finally, along the periphery of New Critics was the Neo-Aristotelian school, whose study of the narrative structure of the novel precipitated the modern narrative critical approach to the Bible.⁵² While more recent theories have superseded New Criticism, contemporary literary theory still feels its impact, and its veneration of the text would eventually find a fertile field among disenchanted historical-critical Biblical scholars.

1.3.1.3. *Structuralism*

Structuralism originated in 1916 in the posthumous linguistic work of Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*.⁵³ Unlike the literary theories such as Russian Formalism and New Criticism, Structuralism was much more of a *movement*—one that philosophically impacted virtually every discipline related to literature by the late 1960s. Arguably, we can trace this movement from its zenith in Paris in the mid-1960s through the work of three men: a linguist, a literary critic, and an anthropologist. Saussure, the linguist, radically altered the conception of language by recognizing it as a system, *langue*, which underlies specific communication, *parole*.⁵⁴ The literary critic was none other than

⁵¹ The Southern Agrarians, or Fugitives, were a circle of American literary critics originating primarily from small Southern colleges, and they were opposed to large-university literary prestige and Northern industrialism; see Selden, Widdowson, and Brooker, *Reader's Guide*, 17–8.

⁵² Foremost in prominence among the Neo-Aristotelians was Wayne C. Booth, whose works would strongly impact Biblical literary critics; see Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (2nd ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1983).

⁵³ Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (trans. Wade Baskin; London: P. Owen, 1961).

⁵⁴ Leonard Jackson admirably summarizes the fundamentals of Saussure's work: "The central element in his theory was his conception of a language (*langue*) as a structured system, which underlies any particular use-of-that-language (*parole*), whether in speech or writing. A second element is the essential arbitrariness of the relationship between the sounds of language and the concepts that those sounds express (the fact that there is nothing pig-like about the word 'pig', for example). He calls this 'the arbitrariness of the sign'. Other elements include the distinction between the historical (or *diachronic*) study of language change and the (*synchronic*) study of its internal structure at a particular time; the distinction between the *syntagmatic* axis of language, by which signs are chained together, and what he calls the *associative* axis by which each sign recalls numerous others which are not present; and the systems of oppositions between sounds and oppositions between concepts, which help to limit the arbitrariness of the sign"; Jackson, *Poverty of Structuralism*, 5.

Roman Jakobson, who in 1928 declared Structuralism the “leading idea of present-day science [of language].”⁵⁵ Claude Lévi-Strauss, the pupil of Jakobson, was the anthropologist; it was principally from the work of Lévi-Strauss that Structuralism settled in Paris, aiding and abetting the works and thoughts of Jacques Lacan, Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida.

Leonard Jackson defines Structuralism as

the practice of studying phenomena as different as societies, minds, languages, literatures, and mythologies as total systems, or connected wholes—that is, structures—and in terms of their internal patterns of connection, rather than as sets of isolated items and in terms of their historical sequence.⁵⁶

However, a dark ideological current underlies this seemingly innocuous definition, for Structuralism’s search for the irreducible units of language precipitated the complete atomization of language into meaningless sound images. As a whole, the Structuralist process not only eliminated the author from the philosophical equation, but originality and humanity as well; literature was nothing more than a remixing of elemental language structures to produce meaning. Ultimately, Structuralism met with harsh criticism, and this criticism led the movement to fragment into a cacophony of Post-Structuralist voices.

1.3.1.4. *Post-Structuralism*

The splintering of the Structuralist movement divided mainstream, contemporary literary theory into multiple strands of critique that came to be known as Post-Structuralism—which includes theories such as Deconstructionism, Post-Colonialism, New Historicism, and Gender Criticism. In many instances, this fragmentation echoed a larger philosophical paradigm shift away from language itself and toward the use of language in discourse or narration.⁵⁷ While comprising diverse ideologies and methodologies, Post-Structuralist theories are united in their anti-Structuralist tendencies. Post-Structuralists reject any totalitarian regime such as Structuralism that simplistically attempts to order and rule language. Instead, Post-Structuralism is characterized

⁵⁵ Roman Jakobson, *Main Trends in the Science of Language* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1973).

⁵⁶ Jackson, *Poverty of Structuralism*, 23.

⁵⁷ Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, 100.

by an indeterminacy of meaning, and encourages a plurality of textual interpretations. For this reason, Leonard Jackson criticizes the practical application of most relativistic Post-Structural theories as a “protest against capitalism, science, Western metaphysics, patriarchy and of anything else that the theorists dislike, than as serious theories about literature or culture.”⁵⁸

Unlike most Post-Structuralist theories of literature, which are characterized by ideological concerns of special interest groups or attempts at cultural criticism, narratology stands aloof from the majority of its ideological siblings. One explanation is that narratology is not merely a rebellious offspring of Structuralism.⁵⁹ While it would be anachronistic to trace the paternity of narratology to Aristotle, it very clearly has Russian Formalism and New Criticism ideologies flowing through its veins. In 1969, Tzvetan Todorov used the term ‘narratology’ in order to describe the theories of narrative proposed by Gérard Genette, Seymour Chatman, himself, and others.⁶⁰ These theories of narrative analysis, or narratology, soon attracted the attention of Biblical scholars, who grafted narratology into their field of study and infused it with new life.

1.3.2. *The Development of Narrative Criticism in Biblical Studies*

Reductionist reconstructions of the development of narrative criticism in Biblical studies tend to emphasize the move from Structuralism in the 1960s to an emphasis on narrative in the 1980s. The interest in the analysis of the literary qualities of Biblical narratives along lines of modern literary theory actually began much earlier; for example, in 1923 F. R. M. Hitchcock published an article on the Fourth Gospel as literary drama.⁶¹ However, the contemporary literary study of the narratives of the Bible formally began with literary critic Erich Auerbach’s

⁵⁸ Jackson, *Poverty of Structuralism*, xi.

⁵⁹ While many commentators place the discussion of narratology between the sections on Structuralism and Post-Structuralism, there is no consensus as to where narratology belongs in contemporary literary theory; for example, Jonathan Culler states that narrative analysis is a branch of semiotics; see Jonathan Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1981), 186.

⁶⁰ Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics* (London: HarperCollins, 1992), 479.

⁶¹ F. R. M. Hitchcock, “Is the Fourth Gospel a Drama?” *Theology* 7 (1923): 307–17; also see Mark Stibbe’s brief list of several pre-1980s Biblical literary critics in Mark W. G. Stibbe, *John as Storyteller* (SNTSMS 73; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1992), 9.

Mimesis in 1953,⁶² whose primary contribution was to emphasize that modern literary criticism was an effective tool for Biblical analysis.⁶³ Following after Auerbach was another literary critic, Northrop Frye, whose ideas about literary theory influenced his statements about Biblical historical-critical studies. Frye argued that literary criticism was a bundle of disorganized ideologies, “subjective value judgments and idle gossip, and badly required the discipline of an objective system.”⁶⁴ Frye also disdained the analysis of the Bible in the hands of historical critics, who he believed viewed the Bible as a motley collection of additions, confections, and redactions.⁶⁵ Instead, Frye advocated a more holistic approach to the Bible, which he believed had “a typological unity, a single archetypal structure, extending from creation to apocalypse.”⁶⁶ Finally, Hans Frei’s 1974 treatise, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative*, sought to restore an interest in the Bible as narratives, which had been eliminated in an 18th century empiricist model of Biblical research.⁶⁷

As literary investigations of Biblical narratives shifted into mainstream Biblical criticism, multiple variations of ideologies and methodologies influenced the development of modern Biblical literary criticism.⁶⁸ While not all works were dedicated to narrative analysis—monographs were produced that utilized Structuralist, deconstructionist, feminist, or reader-response literary methodologies—the common emphasis was a synchronic approach to the text.⁶⁹ Several early models, such as Frank Kermode’s *The Genesis of Secrecy*, attempted to provide general introductions to the Biblical narratives, and foreshadowed more concentrated

⁶² Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (trans. Willard R. Trask; Princeton: Princeton University, 1971).

⁶³ Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 4.

⁶⁴ Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, 79; see Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1957).

⁶⁵ See Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982).

⁶⁶ D. F. Tolmie, *Narratology and Biblical Narratives: A Practical Guide* (San Francisco: International Scholars, 1999), 3.

⁶⁷ Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven: Yale University, 1974).

⁶⁸ Stephen Moore illustrates this by suggesting that in *Mark as Story*, David Rhoads and Donald Michie are quite possibly unaware of the strong ideologies that flowed from New Criticism through Hans Frei and into their treatise; see Moore, *Criticism*, 11; and cf. David Rhoads and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982). This once problematic area for theology and Biblical studies appears to be clearing to some degree; recent monographs have suggested a heightened ideological awareness.

⁶⁹ Tovey, *Narrative Art*, 21.

works that would surface in the 1980s.⁷⁰ In regard to the literary analysis of the Gospels, this decade saw four prominent monographs devoted to each of the four Gospels.⁷¹ As Biblical scholars began to produce more treatises focusing on the narrative aspects of the Bible, especially the Gospels, critics began to categorize the majority of them as ‘narrative criticism.’ While somewhat of a misnomer, the term ‘narrative criticism’ is nonetheless useful at this point in Biblical studies as a comprehensive, methodological categorization.

The theological community has not unanimously welcomed Biblical literary criticism based on contemporary literary theory. However, critical discussions and evaluations are “exceedingly rare”,⁷² and in certain circumstances, at times shortsighted or over-stated.⁷³ Stephen Moore voices realistic concerns in questioning the ideological and methodological stability and longevity of various literary theories that some scholars have utilized in recent Biblical analysis.⁷⁴ As mentioned above, these concerns over the validity of various literary theories have not escaped the attention of members of the literary academy as well. Additionally, Moore notes that the tumultuous nature of contemporary literary theory is often self-deprecating: literary theories often originate and thrive in opposition to pre-existent theories.⁷⁵ With these multiple

⁷⁰ See William A. Beardslee, *Literary Criticism of the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970); Norman R. Petersen, *Literary Criticism for New Testament Critics* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978); and Kermode, *Genesis*.

⁷¹ See Rhoads and Michie, *Mark as Story*; R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983); Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986); and Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986).

⁷² Moore, *Criticism*, xviii.

⁷³ For example, M. C. de Boer, “Narrative Criticism, Historical Criticism, and the Gospel of John,” *JNT* 47:3 (1992): 35–48; furthermore, the dearth of meaningful, constructive criticisms of literary-critical methodologies is unfortunate for a nascent discipline such as narrative criticism, which could benefit greatly from impartial and erudite pruning.

⁷⁴ Moore, *Criticism*, 17; however, concerns of stability and longevity could also be voiced at several sub-areas of historical criticism as well (e.g. form criticism).

⁷⁵ Literary critic T. R. Wright draws an outsider’s distinction between the literary and theological disciplines: “Much theology, for example, tends towards unity and coherence, a systematic exploration of the content of faith which attempts to impose limits on the meaning of words, while literature, as Ezra Pound insisted, is often dangerous, subversive and chaotic, an anarchic celebration of the creative possibilities of language”; see Wright, *Theology and Literature*, 1. While Moore accurately criticizes the subversive and competitive bent of modern literary theories, his discussion of a literary “super method” raises the question as to whether this is a viable alternative in historical critical studies—history has demonstrated that historical criticism is just as fickle; see Moore, *Criticism*, 171.

concerns noted, Moore nonetheless argues that the narrative-critical approach appears to be the most favorable literary methodology for Biblical interpretation.⁷⁶

As an increasing number of literary critics turn to the pages of the Bible with their native tools in hand, members of their scholarly community have also questioned the use of contemporary literary methodologies in Biblical interpretation. Of primary concern to literary critics is the appropriation of literary methodologies by untrained or theologically motivated Biblical scholars.⁷⁷ Literary criticism is, after all, a scholarly discipline⁷⁸—a novice in the physical sciences cannot expect to easily master polymer science or aerospace engineering, and neither will the uninitiated easily master literary criticism.⁷⁹ A reciprocal concern expressed within the literary community is that literary critics respect the rich scholarly tradition that exists within the Biblical camp.⁸⁰

1.3.3. *Exploring the Temporal Mechanics of the Fourth Gospel*

Literary narratology operates as the primary tool within the Biblical domain of narrative criticism. As mentioned above, there is a difference between these two concepts: narrative criticism is a term used in the theological community to describe various literary-critical investigations of the Bible, whereas narratology is one of numerous contemporary literary theories native to the literary academy. While narrative criticism is a field of study, so too is narratology a field of study containing a variety of methods;⁸¹ this is a fact regularly omitted from critical discussions of its use in Biblical studies.⁸² Modern

⁷⁶ Moore, *Criticism*, 177.

⁷⁷ For example, literary critic and narratologist Mieke Bal discusses the consequences of a narrative approach to the Bible in her evaluation of three different approaches to Biblical narrative; see Bal, *On Story-Telling*, 59–72.

⁷⁸ Cf. Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, viii.

⁷⁹ Unfortunately, not all Biblical scholars acknowledge this; e.g. de Boer, “Narrative Criticism,” 48. See Moore’s concluding remarks for a more balanced perspective; Moore, *Criticism*, 176–8.

⁸⁰ In a published discussion between literary critics Frank Kermode and Michael Payne, Kermode lauded the depth of traditional Biblical scholarship, whereas Payne stated that many literary critics fall short in this respect; see Frank Kermode, *Poetry, Narrative, History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1990), 70–1.

⁸¹ Ruth Ronen, *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory* (Literature, Culture, Theory 7; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1994), 147; and Thiselton, *New Horizons*, 471.

⁸² See especially John Ashton, *Studying John: Approaches to the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 141–65; and Christopher Tuckett, *Reading the New Testament: Methods of Interpretation* (London: SPCK, 1987), 175–80.

narratology originated primarily in the shadow of Structuralism, as did numerous other theories.⁸³ With the decline and fall of Structuralism, narratology moved out from under its wing and into its own freedom. Russian Formalism and New Criticism have influenced narratology as well, as have current trends in the literary community. In short, narratology has evolved considerably since 1969. For the purpose of this book, however, narratology is narrow enough for me to designate it as the primary research tool and narrative criticism wide enough to designate it as the field of study.

Given the width of the narratological field, there is a range of definitions for narratology. Etymologically, narratology is the science of narrative.⁸⁴ Academicians have used narratology as an analytical tool to study narratives in diverse fields such as anthropology, film, psychology, literature, historiography and theology. Simply defined, narratology is “the study of the form and functioning of narrative.”⁸⁵ As narratology emerged from the shadow of Structuralism, early narratological theorists often emphasized the form to the exclusion of the functioning.⁸⁶ However, in light of recent trends, narratology has reoccupied its native meaning and has become “a multi-disciplinary study of narrative which negotiates and incorporates the insights of many other critical discourses that involve narrative forms of representation.”⁸⁷

Meeting at the theoretical crossroads of Structuralism and New Criticism, narratology is a synchronic, text-based analysis. While narratology recognizes that any given narrator may tell any given story in many different ways, it sees analytical worth in the individual narrations of any given story. Narratology is a synchronic analysis as it evaluates the worth of the individual narration in light of its own textual identity. One primary way that narratology meets this objective is to

⁸³ Exemplifying the views of a minor group of theorists, Raman Selden defines narratology as an aspect of Structuralist theory, and conflates the two theories without justification. Typical of such a position, Selden simply makes this assumption without discussion, and sees fit to mention the work of Gérard Genette and A. J. Greimas to the exclusion of alternate narratological views; see Raman Selden, ed. *The Theory of Criticism: From Plato to the Present* (London: Longman, 1988), 344.

⁸⁴ Onega, *Narratology*, 1.

⁸⁵ Prince, *Narratology*, 4.

⁸⁶ For example, Genette, *Narrative Discourse*; cf. Meili Steele, “The Dangers of Structuralist Narratology: Genette’s Misinterpretation of Proust,” *RN* 26:3 (1986): 187; and Catherine Gallagher, “Formalism and Time,” *MLQ* 61:1 (2000): 229–30.

⁸⁷ Onega, *Narratology*, 1; for a superb essay delineating the history and future of narratology, see Ronen, “Paradigm Shift.”

study the typical features that are universal to narratives.⁸⁸ We may evaluate narrative features such as voice, speed, focalization, mood, tempo, characterization and context to shed light on the form and functioning of the narrative. Insights from the exploration of these and other narrative devices inform a rich variety of critical areas related to the given text: authorial intent and context, pedagogical potential, counterbalance to alternative critical disciplines, aesthetic value, and historiographical apperceptions.⁸⁹

In this work, we will explore the text of the Fourth Gospel using narratology as the primary tool to investigate one narrative mechanic: time. This work will consider the temporal form and function of the Fourth Gospel, and the manner in which time configures, organizes and divides the Gospel text. Not only will we investigate several of the Gospel's temporal points and movements, but also the gaps between those points and movements. Unlike many investigations of Biblical narratives, I will avoid a predominantly Structuralist approach to narratology. Unlike many investigations of the temporal properties of narrative, I will base this inquiry on a contemporary scientific paradigm of time in lieu of a philosophical or conventional paradigm of time. Finally, this investigation of the temporality of the Fourth Gospel within the broad confines of narrative criticism will constitute a semantic, historical, traditional, and holistic approach to textual hermeneutics and understanding.

1.3.3.1. *A Semantic Approach*

Given the contemporary literary interest in the form and structure of literature, which originated in Russian Formalism and manifested itself in Structuralism, narratology proves to be no exception in its interest in the structure of the narrative form. Formalist Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* is similar to narratologist Gérard Genette's *Narrative Discourse* in that both are acutely concerned with the form of the narrative—the difference being that Propp analyzes the components of plot forms normative to Russian fairy tales whereas Genette examines the narrative's structure through time, mood and voice.⁹⁰ Furthermore, for a variety of reasons, a large majority of early narratological works

⁸⁸ Tolmie, *Narratology and Biblical Narratives*, 1.

⁸⁹ For an extended discussion of the benefits of Biblical narrative criticism, as well as answers to common objections, see Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 85–98.

⁹⁰ Cf. Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*; and Genette, *Narrative Discourse*.

ignored concerns of narrative semantics in favor of narrative syntax.⁹¹ Considering these and other aforementioned factors, it is no wonder that narratology is usually associated with Structuralism.⁹² However, since its inception, narratology has undergone a paradigm shift, moving from “structural descriptions of action-structures in classical structuralism to semantic descriptions of narrative modalities in recent developments in narratology.”⁹³ Literary theorists such as Gerald Prince, Lubomír Doležel, and Thomas Pavel have offered extended discussions of the benefit of narrative semantics, a “particularly fertile and promising subject.”⁹⁴

Ultimately, in order to succeed as the ‘science’ of narrative, narratology must be a field that is devoted to both narrative syntax and narrative semantics.⁹⁵ I do not view narratology as a bifurcated discipline, but as an integrated method to analyze form and functioning, structure and semantics. In analyzing the temporality of the Fourth Gospel, we will in general start with the temporal structure and syntax of the narrative, and conclude with its semantic function and trajectory within the narrative. As this analysis falls within the realm of narrative criticism within the field of Biblical studies, it is not unusual that this should be the case; after all, previous critical endeavors largely focusing on structure such as form or source criticism have been augmented regularly by the semantic use of textual exegesis. In this regard, there is a strong similarity between the role of textual exegesis and narrative semantics in the appropriation of meaning from Biblical texts.

1.3.3.2. *A Traditional Approach*

Given the contemporary literary focus on the Bible, with critical treatises flowing from two independent streams of scholarship, and the present epoch of post-Romantic theories of literature, literary criticism appears

⁹¹ For example, Prince argues that general literary theory unfortunately has little room for concerns of meaning and aesthetic value, and this has impacted narratology as well; see Prince, “Narrative Analysis and Narratology,” 183.

⁹² Onega, *Narratology*, 4.

⁹³ Ronen, “Paradigm Shift,” 817.

⁹⁴ Gerald Prince, “Narratology, Narrative, and Meaning,” *PT* 12:3 (1991): 547.

⁹⁵ Ronen, “Paradigm Shift,” 819. In contrast to this view, Genette argues that while there is room for “two narratologies,” the narratology of narrative structure/syntax is to be preferred over a narratology of narrative semantics; see Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (trans. Jane E. Lewin; Ithaca: Cornell, 1988), 16. However, Ronen rebuts this idea in demonstrating that “this methodological partition does not really hold”; for further discussion see Ronen, “Paradigm Shift,” 818.

as a new commodity in the ancient marketplace of theological research. However, the analysis of the literary features of the Bible pre-dates even the New Testament. Perhaps the best example of this from antiquity the words of the Teacher hint at: “Besides being wise, the Teacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs. The Teacher sought to find pleasing words, and he wrote words of truth plainly” (Eccl 12:9–10, NRSV). Furthermore, the Gospel writers did much of the same thing in the writing of their Gospels under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; to claim that the Gospels “lack literary pretension,”⁹⁶ is to ignore their generic medium entirely, to say nothing of their use of recognizable rhetorical devices within a cogent narrative form.

During the patristic period, two sterling examples of church fathers that recognized the literary features of the Bible and adapted literary theory to the interpretation of the Bible were Jerome and Augustine. Similar to many early church fathers, Jerome (c. AD 342–420) trained in classical Grecian rhetoric, and his discussion of the literary features of the Bible revolved around the contrasts between the works of the Greco-Roman canon and the Bible.⁹⁷ Augustine’s *On Christian Doctrine* goes so far as to set out principles for the literary analysis of the Bible; given this, we can agree “it would hardly be an overstatement to say that the subsequent history of the Bible as literature is a series of footnotes to Augustine.”⁹⁸

During the Reformation period, the Reformers tied their exegesis of Scripture heavily into their understanding of the Bible as literature as well as applied literary theory.⁹⁹ Therefore, in light of concerns over the recent turn to literary criticism,¹⁰⁰ a more accurate premise for a

⁹⁶ Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Encountering John: The Gospel in Historical, Literary, and Theological Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 31.

⁹⁷ Jerome, *Letters*, 22.29 (NPNF 6:35); as well as Jerome, *Prefaces* (NPNF 6:483–98).

⁹⁸ Leland Ryken, “The Bible as Literature: A Brief History,” in *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible* (ed. Leland Ryken and Tremper Longman III; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 53.

⁹⁹ Barbara K. Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1979).

¹⁰⁰ For example, Steve Motyer espouses the view that the application of contemporary literary techniques to ancient Scripture is “anachronistic”; Steve Motyer, “Method in Fourth Gospel Studies: A Way Out of the Impasse?” *JST* 66:2 (1997): 34. However, if this is anachronistic, then it is an anachronism that has been perpetuated by Biblicists since the time of the early church fathers (e.g. the aforementioned interpretation of Jerome) and exemplified by Robert Lowth in 1741; see Robert Lowth, *Lectures on the*

discussion of the literary analysis of the Bible is that “before the advent of historical criticism that is how it *was* read, as a whole, responding to its narrative and poetic power.”¹⁰¹ In light of the long-standing tradition of viewing the Bible as a work of literature that can be analyzed accordingly, literary criticism admirably complements historical criticism as a viable means of Biblical analysis and interpretation, demonstrating “that a good grasp of literary theory enhances, rather than detracts from, a perceptive theological approach.”¹⁰²

Building on this understanding, our analysis of the temporal mechanics of the Fourth Gospel embodies a ‘traditional’ approach to the Biblical text in another manner as well. The Protestant Reformation not only severed the institutional authority of the mother church from its societal moorings, but also reversed the emphasis on tradition as a vehicle of validity. Soon after René Descartes’ (1596–1650) famous maxim *ego cogito, ergo sum* enthroned the self as the center of the epistemological universe,¹⁰³ the break with tradition was made virtually complete in Biblical studies by Friedrich Schleiermacher’s (1768–1834) theory of hermeneutics.¹⁰⁴ From the Enlightenment onward, the modern study of the Bible has been marked with a detached, autotheistic rationalism, avoiding tradition as an epistemological source, and questing for original yet orphaned interpretations of Scripture.¹⁰⁵ Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur have adequately critiqued the weaknesses of a Cartesian

Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews (ed. Calvin E. Stowe; Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 1829). Furthermore, it is only as anachronistic as its historical-critical counterpart; i.e., utilizing contemporary ideas about historiography, redaction, source development, and textual transmission to judge the history, development, and meaning of Biblical texts. Such concerns are not limited to Biblical literary criticism—they are valid concerns that we must consider alongside all avenues of Biblical (and ancient text) enquiry.

¹⁰¹ Wright, *Theology and Literature*, 47; and see also Frei, *Eclipse*, 1–7.

¹⁰² Thiselton, *New Horizons*, 479; and cf. Dennis E. Smith, “Narrative Beginnings in Ancient Literature and Theory,” *Semeia* 52 (1990): 7.

¹⁰³ René Descartes, *Discourse on the Method and Meditations on First Philosophy* (ed. David Weissman; New Haven: Yale, 1996), 21; and cf. Anthony Thiselton, “Biblical Studies and Theoretical Hermeneutics,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation* (ed. John Barton; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1998), 97–105.

¹⁰⁴ See Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics: The Handwritten Manuscripts* (ed. Heinz Kimmerle; Missoula: Scholars, 1977).

¹⁰⁵ Concern that contemporary Biblical literary criticism employs a Cartesian methodology is warranted, but only so much as it is warranted in every critical discipline of Biblical analysis. Cartesianism is alive and well in the sub-discipline of historical criticism; for example, the current ‘Quest of the Beloved Disciple’ perpetuated by parts of the modern, scholarly Johannine community, in many instances favors unique historical fabrications and completely jettisons traditional understandings—see for example, Barbara Thiering, *The Book that Jesus Wrote: John’s Gospel* (Sydney: Doubleday,

hermeneutic.¹⁰⁶ In light of this, I will approach the Fourth Gospel with the view that “the task of the thinker is not, as Descartes held, to construct the intellectual edifice absolutely from scratch, but rather to build creatively with what is already there.”¹⁰⁷ Moving beyond a Hegelian inwardizing (*Aufhebung*) of the text, our temporal analysis will move toward a two-fold manifestation of a “hermeneutics of consent” by considering factors such as traditional interpretations and theological sensitivities.¹⁰⁸

1.3.3.3. *A Historical Approach*

Overwhelmingly, the most frequent criticism of modern literary approaches to the Bible is that they are ahistorical. As an example of this opinion, Martinus de Boer claims, “This method is intrinsically and rigorously ahistorical—although it does sometimes seem as if its practitioners are motivated by an expressly *antihistorical* bias and agenda.”¹⁰⁹ In fact, this concern is so great in some scholarly circles that Steve Motyer argues there is, in effect, an “impasse” in Biblical scholarship between narrative criticism and historical criticism.¹¹⁰ While it is not my purpose to defend narrative criticism as a whole, some

1998), 63. Therefore, Cartesianism is a valid concern of Biblical interpretation, but it is not an acceptable critique of Biblical literary criticism.

¹⁰⁶ See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (2nd ed.; trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald Marshall; New York: Crossroad, 1989); and Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1992). Eloquenty summarizing Ricoeur’s contribution, Thiselton writes: “His greatest genius, however, is to share with Gadamer the task of dethroning the self as the centre of the stage from Descartes to later modernity, while resisting the postmodern reduction of so decentering the self that it becomes a mere amalgam of imposed role-performances rather than an active, responsible, accountable agent whose life has purpose, continuity, and destiny”; Thiselton, “Biblical Studies and Theoretical Hermeneutics,” 105. Given the rise of radical reader-response criticism, Biblical literary criticism must pay heed to this hermeneutical Scylla and Charybdis described by Thiselton.

¹⁰⁷ Roger Lundin, “Interpreting Orphans: Hermeneutics in the Cartesian Tradition,” in *The Promise of Hermeneutics* (ed. Roger Lundin, Clarence Walhout, and Anthony C. Thiselton; Cambridge: Paternoster, 1999), 56.

¹⁰⁸ G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (trans. A. V. Miller; Oxford: Oxford University, 1977); and Peter Stuhlmacher, *Historical Criticism and Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Toward a Hermeneutics of Consent* (trans. Roy A. Harrisville; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 84–90, respectively.

¹⁰⁹ De Boer, “Narrative Criticism,” 37; for an equally extreme critique from a literary critic regarding literary narratology (specifically Structuralist narratology at the hands of Genette), see Steele, “Dangers,” 187.

¹¹⁰ Motyer elaborates that “the ‘impasse’ to which I refer is of course that between the recent synchronic, narrative-critical interpretations and traditional, diachronic historical criticism”; Motyer, “Method,” 27; see also Johannes Beutler and Robert T.

readers may feel it unusual to suggest that my approach to the Fourth Gospel would constitute a historical approach—given statements like de Boer’s—and therefore an explanation is in order.

It is unwarranted and unreasonable to state that narrative criticism as a discipline is antihistorical; furthermore, de Boer’s statement concerning the antihistorical motivations of narrative-critical practitioners tends to be largely subjective and pejorative. A possible explanation for a one-sided position such as de Boer’s begins at the premise. Specifically addressing the text of the Fourth Gospel, de Boer alleges it is “perilous to assume or to maintain its thematic coherence and its narrative cohesion.” Unfortunately, this position presupposes the text is broken, and therefore we must fix it.¹¹¹ This pessimistic point of view overlooks the thematic coherence and narrative cohesion experienced by its readers for two millennia.¹¹² Ironically, if we level such presuppositions and their subsequent historical-critical methodologies at James Joyce’s *Ulysses* or William Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury*, we would be forced to consider them nothing more than “shoddily ‘redacted’ literary scraps.”¹¹³

Narrative criticism is not antihistorical—nor is it ahistorical. Narrative criticism is based on a *synchronic* analysis of the text, and in order to be precise, synchronic and ahistorical are not synonymous.¹¹⁴ It is not that a synchronic analysis ignores historical referents; it is that a synchronic analysis begins in the text and not exterior to the text. Furthermore, while narratology originated in the study of fictional texts, the method is equally applicable to historiography.¹¹⁵ Ultimately, any

Fortna, *The Shepherd Discourse of John 10 and Its Context: Studies by Members of the Johannine Writings Seminar* (SNTSMS 67; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1991), 4.

¹¹¹ To ensure accuracy, I distilled this summarization of de Boer’s argument from his article, as well as from critical comments by Motyer; see Motyer, “Method,” 28–9.

¹¹² In light of this opinion, Francis Watson argues, “A synchronic reading perspective is more appropriate to the status of the biblical texts as holy scripture than a diachronic one that locates them in the midst of an amorphous mass of uncertain, shifting, competing hypotheses”; see Francis Watson, *Text, Church and World: Biblical Interpretation in Theological Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 60; further, see Chapter 5.

¹¹³ Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic, 1981), 21.

¹¹⁴ It is unclear whether de Boer upholds the synonymy of the terms, “synchronic” and “ahistorical.” Nonetheless, his work draws referential boundaries around narrative criticism that simply don’t exist. In his article, de Boer suggests that historical critics can use some aspects of narrative criticism, but this is bewildering if it is “intrinsically and rigorously” ahistorical. Furthermore, if a diachronically-oriented historical critic can still use elements of synchronically-oriented narrative criticism, then certainly the reverse can also be true; see de Boer, “Narrative Criticism,” 40–1.

¹¹⁵ Dorrit Cohn, “Signposts of Fictionality: A Narratological Perspective,” *PT* 11:4 (1990): 775.

claim that narrative criticism is by definition ahistorical is an “unwarranted dichotomy,”¹¹⁶ and numerous examples exist to demonstrate otherwise.¹¹⁷ The charge that narrative criticism is ahistorical in theory or in practice must be laid aside.

However, there remains the need to express more even-handed concerns about synchronic analyses and the narrative method. As an example, D. A. Carson worries that “in some instances it focuses so narrowly on the artistry of the narrative that any historical referent the story may ostensibly have is lost to view.”¹¹⁸ Carson’s concern is valid and we must address it, but it does not prohibit a referential, narrative-critical analysis of the Biblical text. Ultimately, Biblical literary criticism “has not come to abolish historical criticism but to complement it. Just as historical criticism should not ignore the semantic significance of literary form so literary criticism needs to accept that the Bible makes historical claims which need to be tested.”¹¹⁹

Our exploration of the Fourth Gospel is a historical approach because it is a synchronic, narrative-critical exploration that addresses certain aspects of the historical referents of the Gospel, such as the issue of ancient temporality, textual referentiality with the ancient world, and the temporal trajectory of the Gospel text. Just as historical critics have used literary techniques in the past to bolster their arguments, so too can elements of historical criticism enhance a mature narrative-critical investigation.¹²⁰ In this way, synchronic and narrative-critical approaches may work in harmony alongside diachronic and historical-critical methodologies.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ Mieke Bal, “The Point of Narratology,” *PT* 11:4 (1990): 750; and cf. Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1984).

¹¹⁷ Kermode, *Poetry, Narrative, History*, 32; Jeffrey L. Staley, “What Can a Postmodern Approach to the Fourth Gospel Add?” in *Jesus in Johannine Tradition* (ed. Robert T. Fortna and Tom Thatcher; Louisville: WJK, 2001), 48, 50; a clear example from Johannine studies is Charles Talbert’s commentary, see Charles H. Talbert, *Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles* (Reading the New Testament Series; New York: Crossroad, 1992).

¹¹⁸ Carson, *Gagging of God*, 83; and cf. Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1991), 164–5.

¹¹⁹ Wright, *Theology and Literature*, 58.

¹²⁰ Motyer, “Method,” 39.

¹²¹ Even de Boer admits that the basic communicative process is agreed upon in both historical and narrative criticism, thereby allowing at least one point of congruence; see de Boer, “Narrative Criticism,” 39–40. According to Watson, “contemporary historiographical theory makes it possible to understand the gospels as narrated history, in a manner that combines the current ‘literary’ emphasis on the irreducibility of

1.3.3.4. *A Holistic Approach*

Finally, our temporal analysis of the Fourth Gospel constitutes a holistic approach to the text—an approach that is frequently absent from Biblical studies under the current hegemony of historical criticism.¹²² In the name of an Enlightenment-spawned empiricism, modern historical criticism has performed a vivisection on a living document such as the Fourth Gospel;¹²³ critics have beaten plowshares into swords in order to sever the Johannine stories from the text of the Fourth Gospel in their quest for “imaginary redactional levels.”¹²⁴ A desire to move beyond a textually pessimistic point of view is not as much a new wave in Biblical studies as it is a desire to move beyond the current detour of textual atomization and back onto the mainstream of positive (not positivistic) Biblical interpretation that flourished for eighteen centuries. Given narrative criticism’s insistence to approach the text of the Fourth Gospel as a coherent, cohesive whole, this method “has the merit of reasserting the integrity and irreducibility of the gospel narratives—an essential precondition for a theological interpretation that sees them as historiographical renderings of the uniquely and ultimately significant event of the Word become flesh.”¹²⁵

In approaching the Fourth Gospel as a whole, I recognize that there is in fact an “inseparability of form and content” of the Fourth Gospel text.¹²⁶ For better or for worse, the revelation received by the Fourth Evangelist is textually mediated. This textually mediated revelation necessitates that Biblical scholars concern themselves with not only what is in the text, but also *why* it is in the text. In this regard, it is crucial to examine the form and functioning of the text as a whole. In light of this, a holistic approach entails that nothing that happens

the gospels’ narrativity with the conventional ‘historical’ concern for the relationship between text and reality”; see Watson, *Text and Truth*, 41.

¹²² John M. Court, *Reading the New Testament* (NTR; London: Routledge, 1997), 40; and Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 42.

¹²³ Francis Moloney elaborates on the need to reassert the textual unity of the Gospel: “The narrative of the Gospel of John must be appreciated as a whole, as a unified coherent utterance, and not be dissected into its constituent parts to be left, in pieces, on the scholar’s table;” Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (Sacra Pagina 4; Collegeville: Liturgical, 1998), 13; and see also Frank Kermode, “John,” in *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (ed. Robert Alter and Frank Kermode; Cambridge: Belknap, 1987), 441.

¹²⁴ Thomas L. Brodie, review of Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, *Biblica* 80:4 (1999): 583.

¹²⁵ Watson, *Text and Truth*, 10.

¹²⁶ Wright, *Theology and Literature*, 4.

in the textually mediated revelation contained in the Fourth Gospel is irrelevant or accidental;¹²⁷ each event and existent within the text is necessary to the overall development and reader's understanding of the text.¹²⁸ In conclusion, we will examine the Fourth Gospel with an optimistic, holistic view of the text, emphasizing the narrative unity and "the consistency of the underlying point of view of an author who has shaped and told a story of the life of Jesus in a way unparalleled by any other early Christian writing."¹²⁹

1.4. OVERVIEW

In this book, I will survey the temporal mechanics of the Fourth Gospel by creating an original paradigm for narrative time, analyzing multiple functions of narrative temporality in the Gospel in light of this paradigm, and developing the foundation for a narrative hermeneutic of temporal relativity. This first chapter introduced the triumvirate of narrative, time, and Gospel, and provided an overview of the narrative theory and general method we will utilize to grasp the temporality of the Fourth Gospel. Due to the critical need for an effective—and not merely assumed—conception of time, the second chapter will explore several conceptions of time throughout the history of ideas. In addition, we will also develop a paradigm for the function of narrative temporality in the Fourth Gospel we will apply in the remaining chapters. Our exploration of the Gospel formally begins in the third chapter, where we will consider the finite nature of narratives and the manner in which time enters and exits the beginning and conclusion of the text. In the fourth chapter, we will deliberate the long-standing problems of Johannine structure and textual organization, pose an

¹²⁷ Yuri Lotman stresses that every element of a text is purposefully and cognizantly embedded in the text; see Yuri Lotman, *The Structure of the Artistic Text* (trans. Ronald Vroon; Michigan Slavic Contributions 7; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1977); furthermore, Aristotle maintained that each of these purposeful elements are vital to a healthy text; see Aristotle, *Poetics*, 6–8.

¹²⁸ As Derek Tovey notes, literary readings entail that "stress is placed on the overall coherence of the narrative, and meaning is found in the relationship of parts to the whole"; Tovey, *Narrative Art*, 21; Ludwig Wittgenstein's work in linguistic relationships echoes the sentiments of a synchronic narrative analysis, and his examples emphasize the benefit of examining the interrelationships of meaning within the text itself; see Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (trans. G. E. M. Anscombe; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968), 563.

¹²⁹ Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 15.

original solution to this impasse, and suggest a potential temporal configuration for the construction of the Gospel. We will turn to the inner workings of narrative order in the fifth chapter, wherein I will argue for the approximate coherence of the Fourth Gospel based on intrinsic narrative temporalities. We will return to the structure of the Fourth Gospel in the sixth chapter with a study of the effect of rhythm and events on the temporality of the narrative. In the seventh chapter, we will question the role of possible temporal worlds in the development of the Fourth Gospel. The final chapter will offer a conclusion of the results and implications for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MECHANICS OF TIME

He's murdering the time! Off with his head!

—The Queen of Hearts

2.1. TIME IN WORLD

The Oxford Dictionary of the English Language offers twenty-seven different definitions for the simple and mundane word, ‘time.’¹ While some of these definitions are broad in scope, others are very specific and distinct. In regards to those definitions that attempt to render precisely the concept of time as a whole, one common bond shared by each of these definitions is that they use temporal ideas within the definition. This quandary is not limited to the Oxford English Dictionary; the history of human thought has demonstrated that these definitions, “like all attempts to encapsulate the essence of time in some neat formula, are unhelpfully circular because they employ temporal notions.”² Furthermore, time often eludes a precise definition because people often consider it a substance when it is merely substantive; as the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein suggests, an ostensive definition of time is presumably beyond the ken of human thought.³ Not only is defining time on a broad scale difficult, so also is dissecting the concept for easier analysis. In doing so, certain thinkers maintain that there are different types or modes of time.⁴ Scholars have suggested various

¹ J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, eds. *The Oxford English Dictionary* (2nd ed.; vol. 18; Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), 100–10; the *Collins English Dictionary* supplies the reader with no less than 62 different definitions of time; see *Collins English Dictionary: Millennium Edition* (n.p.: HarperCollins, 1998), 1602.

² John Earman and Richard M. Gale, “Time,” in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (ed. Robert Audi; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1995), 803.

³ Furthermore, Wittgenstein questions the validity of seeking “ostensive definitions” for concepts such as time; see Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books: Preliminary Studies for the “Philosophical Investigations”* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969), 1, 26.

⁴ In a telling example, Tal Goldfajn asserts that there are three different modes of time: physical time, psychic time, and linguistic time. However, this temporal trichotomy—as with most other exclusive breakdowns of the concept of time—leaves

temporal categories through the ages; for example, psychological time, mathematical time, biological time, physical time, and timelessness are each a potential demarcation detailing a certain characteristic of the nature of time. However, while such distinctions may enable a person to better grasp an aspect of the nature of time, it is overall an unsatisfactory, and more importantly, unsatisfying alternative to the problem of defining time.

The problem of defining the concept of time dates back to antiquity and is hardly a modern concern. Zeno of Elea (c. 490–454 BC), a follower of the Hellenic philosopher Parmenides, posited four paradoxes in an attempt to demonstrate that time cannot be satisfactorily defined.⁵ While each of these paradoxes attacked different aspects of time (including motion and space), the overall result was to question the validity of time as a whole. Zeno's paradoxes retain valid concerns that still puzzle thinkers to this day. Another statement from antiquity that recognizes the uncertainty of properly defining time is from Augustine, who asks this famous question:

For what is time? Who is able easily and briefly to explain that? Who is able so much as in thought to comprehend it, so as to express himself concerning it? And yet what in our usual discourse do we more familiarly and knowingly make mention of than time? And surely, we understand it well enough, when we speak of it: we understand it also, when in speaking with another we hear it named. What is time then? If nobody asks me, I know: but if I were desirous to explain it to one that should ask me, plainly I know not.⁶

one unsatisfied that a necessary definition has been established; see Tal Goldfajn, *Word Order and Time in Biblical Hebrew Narrative* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 2.

⁵ The most famous of these paradoxes is the race between Achilles and a tortoise (the tortoise is the description given to Achilles' unidentified competitor only in later, post-Aristotelian discussions). In this paradox, the tortoise is allowed to start moving to the finish line first. At a later time, Achilles is allowed to begin running in order to catch the tortoise and win the race. However, Zeno's assertion is that regardless of how fast Achilles runs, he will never reach the tortoise. His rationale is that as Achilles is running, so too is the tortoise. At a given moment in time, n , Achilles is directly behind the tortoise. However, at $n+1$, Achilles has moved forward—but so has the tortoise. Thus, as much as Achilles moves, so too does the tortoise continue to move, *ad infinitum*; thus, to Zeno, a tortoise with a head start will always beat Achilles; see Aristotle, *Physics*, 6.9, and Simplicius, *Corollary on Time*, 796.33–797.27; also H. D. P. Lee, *Zeno of Elea* (Cambridge Classical Studies; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1936), 50–1, 76–8. For an extended discussion, see Wesley C. Salmon, *Space, Time, and Motion: A Philosophical Introduction* (Encino: Dickenson, 1975), 31–67.

⁶ Augustine, *Confessions*, 11.14.

Ultimately, an encompassing definition of time is simply unattainable.⁷

In the first chapter, I demonstrated that in many instances it was more profitable to consider an enigmatic concept such as literature along a functional, rather than ontological, axis. Time is, after all, a vast and enigmatic concept with a multitude of possible avenues to investigate.⁸ Every field of human research or thought has wrestled with the concept of time, and the amount of material on the subject is analogous to grains of sand on the seashore.⁹ Furthermore, because of the central position that it plays in the human existence, the attempt to conform, limit, or amalgamate time almost always “meets with great scepticism and resistance.”¹⁰ Therefore, I will approach time from a functional rather than an ontological point of view.¹¹

In light of this, I will not offer a definition of time; instead, I will offer various conceptions for the manner in which time functions in certain situations. As a result, a paradigm of narrative temporality based on one of these conceptions may help illuminate the temporal mechanics of the Fourth Gospel. Lawrence Fagg suggests, “Like the translucent facets of a diamond, perceptions of time from the viewpoint of one cultural source can complement and illumine those from another.”¹² In this way, we anticipate that temporal perceptions from one field of thought can complement and illumine those from another. Therefore, after a brief investigation of various conceptions of time, I will propose that the view of time espoused by modern physics is the best choice to elucidate the time of narratives. Furthermore, I believe this conception for understanding the function of time is best suited to understand precisely how time functions in the Fourth Gospel. While empirical truths of the physical sciences cannot unilaterally be applied to philosophical issues, it is possible to insert “controlled extensions of useful concepts, models, and categories into whatever fresh fields

⁷ For example, see Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 2:125; S. R. Doss, “Copernicus Revisited: Time Versus ‘Time’ Versus *Time*,” *PPR* 31 (1970): 194; and Astrid Möller and Nino Luraghi, “Time in the Writing of History: Perceptions and Structures,” *Storia della Storiografia* 28 (1995): 3.

⁸ Philip Turetzky, *Time* (London: Routledge, 1998), xi.

⁹ Lawrence W. Fagg, *The Becoming of Time: Integrating Physical and Religious Time* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1995), xi.

¹⁰ Paul Davies, *God and the New Physics* (London: J. M. Dent, 1983), 119.

¹¹ John Earman and Richard Gale suggest that a functional approach to understanding time is indeed a worthwhile endeavor; see Earman and Gale, “Time,” 803.

¹² Fagg, *Becoming*, 1.

of thought may give them new fruitfulness.”¹³ This is an especially worthwhile endeavor with regards to the concept of time, due to its ubiquitous yet anomalous nature.¹⁴

Prior to exploring a modern physics conception of time, we will briefly consider other broad conceptions of time in our world. Unlike many philosophers, scientists, and theologians who have contributed to various conceptions of time, we will not seek to outline the history of time in human thought, prove the existence of time, or come to grips with the ontology of time. Instead, I will present several broad and functional conceptions of time in order to select one to highlight best the temporal mechanics within the narrative of the Fourth Gospel. Prior to embarking on this endeavor, I must mention several caveats. First, while I have organized these conceptions into a slightly manageable fashion, they are also very shallow in depth. Again, there is a limitless amount of literature on time—in nearly every field known to humanity. Second, while the lines drawn in this chapter may appear neat, they are anything but neat. The lines differentiating various conceptions of time are often extremely blurred; for example, Aristotle’s ideas about time could place him in any of the following conceptions except the last one. Finally, borrowing a concept from Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, I will approach these conceptions along a “favored axis,” moving toward increasingly “evolved” views of time.¹⁵

2.1.1. *Time as a Line: Conventional Views of Time*

Time stands at the core of human existence and experience. Ultimately, human existence is a temporal existence—it is a function of time.¹⁶ For this reason, the first conception we will examine is the conventional understanding of time. This view of time is rooted in the nature of humanity; it is the way in which people feel, live, and experience time. It is the time philosophers and scientists encounter when the day of

¹³ Frederick Ferré, “Grünbaum on Temporal Becoming: A Critique,” *IPQ* 12:3 (1972): 427.

¹⁴ The eminent physicist Arthur Eddington states, “In any attempt to bridge the domains of experience belonging to the spiritual and physical sides of nature, time occupies the key position”; see Arthur S. Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World* (New York: Macmillan, 1928), 91.

¹⁵ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, “Turmoil or Genesis?” in *Science and Religion: New Perspectives on the Dialogue* (ed. Ian G. Barbour; London: SCM, 1968), 216–28.

¹⁶ Gustav E. Mueller, “Experiential and Existential Time and Their Relation to Eternity,” *K-S* 50 (1958): 90.

research—perhaps even into the mysteries of time—is done. Simply put, we may represent a conventional view of time as a *line*.¹⁷ Human existence entails a past, a present, and a future. An individual is aware of the present, remembers the past, and looks ahead to the future; the person may seem to be in a unidirectional flow of time from past to present to future—or perhaps from future to present to past. If we were to examine the life of an individual, it may seem quite similar to the oak tree in Chapter 1; simply replace the words in that example with ‘baby,’ ‘child’ and ‘man,’ and it produces a simple time-line of a human life. At the same time, the delineation of experienced time may not always be past, present and future—another key demarcation in a conventional understanding of time is ‘earlier’ or ‘later,’ and ‘before’ or ‘after.’¹⁸ In essence, temporal designations of earlier and later entail a ‘before or after’ idea; we can see that the acorn/baby event occurs before/earlier than the sapling/child event.

To a large extent, human existence is organized in a before and after, earlier and later, fashion; an individual’s daily life is organized around what must be accomplished sooner and what can be done later. As an individual moves from one event to the next, moves from earlier to later, time appears to *flow*. In many cases, the individual experiences the flow of time differently. An individual waiting for an overdue train experiences the flow of time at a different speed than an Army officer

¹⁷ We will represent this conception as a line as opposed to a circle or axis (see subsequent sections); the reason is due to the linear succession of events that is indicative of the human experience of time. G. J. Whitrow, a historian of time and science, argues, “Our conception of time is one of the peculiar characteristics of the modern world,” (p. 8) and maintains that until the last few centuries, most all civilizations have regarded time as cyclical. However, we depict the conventional paradigm as a line due to the ability of the human race to understand concepts such as past, present and future—concepts that animal species cannot comprehend, as Whitrow admits (p. 10); see G. J. Whitrow, *What is Time?* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972), 7–10. Furthermore, while the clock, modern science and a Judeo-Christian ethic have contributed to the modern (Western) view of time, the linearity of succession (and thus the conventional paradigm) is still valid in a cyclical system (see below). Using a spatial example, one could regard the earth as flat due to the relatively large curvature of the earth; in the same way, even if time truly were cyclical, an individual existing on time’s relatively large arc would experience time as linear succession.

¹⁸ Some readers may recognize the shadow of J. M. E. McTaggart’s *A* and *B* series of time in this section. While McTaggart’s work has played a monumental role in the modern study of the theory of time, this chapter only seeks to detail various aspects of time that are perceived in daily existence. I will briefly mention McTaggart’s influence in section 2.1.3.

in the middle of a firefight.¹⁹ “From the dawn of history, the nature of time has proved deeply puzzling and paradoxical to human beings,” writes Paul Davies. “It is in some ways the most basic aspect of our experience of the world. After all, the very concept of selfhood hinges on the preservation of personal identity through time.”²⁰ However, that conventional understanding of time that is basic to human existence also remains a paradox for daily life. While there are several factors, one reason is due to the fact that certain aspects of the way time functions are probably a result of learning from nurture and culture. In addition, studies have shown that the auditory perception of the passage of time is far greater than the visual—time more easily deceives the eyes.²¹ Therefore, when we see time pass, we may be reflecting a learned understanding of time rather than an innate view of time. Indeed, a conventional understanding of time is often focused on what we see—the *now*. Existence, it seems, exists in the now, as the past is no more and the future is not yet come. In the human experience of time, only the present—the now—is ‘real.’

Most significantly, however, is the relationship between time and language in articulating the conventional view of time. This relationship between time and language is one that both clouds and clears any understanding of time. Language, the system of signs that humans use to communicate meaning and intent, is the most basic method of communicating and understanding time. To a certain degree, the meaning of time is embedded in language.²² Again, this approach has produced mixed results. As mentioned above, dictionaries often contain an unwieldy number of definitions in their attempt to render precisely the concept of time. The usage of the word has also produced semantic

¹⁹ Michael G. Flaherty, *A Watched Pot: How We Experience Time* (New York: New York University, 1999), 13; and H. Eisler, “The Parallel-Clock Model: A Tool for Quantification of Experienced Duration,” in *The Nature of Time: Geometry, Physics and Perception* (ed. Rosolino Buccheri, Metod Saniga, and William Mark Stuckey; NATOSS 2: MPC 95; Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2003), 19–26.

²⁰ Paul Davies, *About Time: Einstein’s Unfinished Revolution* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), 16.

²¹ For example, J. H. Patterson and D. M. Green, “Marking of Transient Signals Having Identical Energy Spectra,” *Audiology* 10 (1971): 85–96; and cf. G. J. Whitrow, *The Natural Philosophy of Time* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1980), 73.

²² As Doss is quick to point out, “the word ‘time’ may have different meanings in its different usages, . . . [yet] its meaningfulness does not entail the existence of something for which the word stands.” Thus, it could be argued that ‘time’ is only a construct of language, and does not exist apart from it; see Doss, “Copernicus Revisited,” 206.

variants in common parlance; for example, in certain instances time may speak more of chronology, and in other instances, of temporality.²³ Furthermore, the artistry of a language produces many of the metaphors that describe a conventional understanding of time. "In ordinary language, time is discussed in terms of metaphors, many of which bring with them the image of time flowing like a liquid, of time being a sort of stuff that can be stopped up, or spent, or used carelessly."²⁴ There appears to be no limit to the metaphors for time in language;²⁵ but to Paul Davies, who writes to justify the use of another conception of time, these are but "naïve images."²⁶

Due to the intimate relationship between time and language, researchers have scrutinized both common and esoteric human languages and have unearthed strong affinities between time and language that appear nearly universal within linguistic forms of human communication. For example, a study conducted by Hoyt Alverson on temporal aphorisms, metaphors, and terminologies within four languages—English, Mandarin, Hindi, and Sesotho—resulted in a collation of five general, temporal categories for the way individuals speak and/or think about time.²⁷ With a certain language's linguistic and idiomatic peculiarities notwithstanding, Alverson's study demonstrates a sweeping correlation between conventional temporal concepts and language. However, one of the most famous studies on the relationship between time and language draws into question this conventional conception as universally applicable. The study, conducted by Benjamin Whorf on the Hopi language, argues that the Hopi language lacks any explicit or implicit

²³ For example, Richard Swinburne states that there are two primary uses of the word time in the English language: an instant or a sum of periods; see Richard Swinburne, *Space and Time* (London: Macmillan, 1968), 158.

²⁴ Keith Seddon, *Time: A Philosophical Treatment* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 4.

²⁵ For example, consider the usage of the word 'time' in the following phrases: 'Do you have the time?' 'The time is 12:20.' 'The linebacker called time-out.' 'Ken is doing time in jail for his crime.' 'The music was written in $\frac{3}{4}$ time.' or 'Jason is having the time of his life.' Furthermore, certain metaphors are related given their wide semantic range: 'the river of time,' 'time management,' 'time marches on,' 'time flows,' 'timekeeper,' or 'time zone.'

²⁶ Davies, *New Physics*, 127.

²⁷ These categories are summarized as follows: 1) the use or value of time, 2) the effects of time, 3) time and motion, 4) time as a course and 5) measuring time; see Hoyt Alverson, *Semantics and Experience: Universal Metaphors of Time in English, Mandarin, Hindi, and Sesotho* (Baltimore: JHU, 1994), 67–91.

references to time.²⁸ For this reason, anthropologists of time frequently criticize the conventional conception of time as inaccurate or misleading—evidence shows that pre-modern peoples often possess several popular yet distinct conventions for time. However, natural languages are fluid structures that may express temporal notions in both lexical and syntactical means, and through nearly every part of speech.²⁹ Even Whorf admits that the Hopi language distinguishes between the manifested and unmanifested of reality, which can be broken down along past/present and future lines.³⁰ In light of this, elements of the conventional conception of time appear nearly universal in the natural affinities between time and language.

In recent centuries, one of the most significant factors that shaped the conventional understanding of time is the clock. Prior to the advent of the clock as a convention of human existence, the primary method of measuring time was the calendar. As early as 2773 BC, Egyptian astronomers in the Third Dynasty introduced the Sothic calendar containing 12 months and 365 days a year, complete with leap year adjustments.³¹ However, the accuracy of the clock came much slower, with the development of the rudimentary Egyptian sun-clock in the middle of the second millennium BC and even later the water-clock, or *clepsydra*, as it was later known to the Greeks.³² At the height of the Hellenic civilization, Greek city-states recognized six hours of the day and four watches during the night, but the strong sense of individualism prevented the development of a universal system.³³

²⁸ Benjamin Lee Whorf, *Language, Thought, and Reality* (ed. John B. Carroll; Cambridge: MIT, 1956), 57.

²⁹ Goldfajn, *Word Order and Time*, 37; further, C. Stutterheim states that “in all languages there are words that in some way or other indicate something temporal”; see C. F. P. Stutterheim, “Time in Language and Literature” (trans. Pieter Johannes Verhoeff), in *The Voices of Time: A Cooperative Survey of Man’s Views of Time as Expressed by the Sciences and by the Humanities* (ed. J. T. Fraser; London: Penguin, 1968), 170–1.

³⁰ This is perhaps an oversimplification, but beyond the scope of this chapter; see Whorf, *Language, Thought, and Reality*, 59.

³¹ G. J. Whitrow, *Time in History: The Evolution of Our General Awareness of Time and Temporal Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1988), 26.

³² The clepsydra, a timepiece based on the movement of water from one vessel to another, is literally in the Greek, ‘water thief.’ As with many things, the ancients—in this case, at least the Greeks and Chinese—built colossal examples, with one clepsydra towering to four stories in height; see Alexander Waugh, *Time: Its Origin, Its Enigma, Its History* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 1999), 53–4.

³³ M. R. Wright, *Cosmology in Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1995), 127.

Not until the Renaissance did the clock begin to play a major role in the conventional view of time, with large clocks appearing on the town hall or church of most communities in Europe. Arguably, this led to an increased awareness of the objectivity of physical time.³⁴ As the accuracy of the clock has increased in the past millennium, focusing first on hours, then minutes, then seconds, and then nano-seconds,³⁵ the conventional view of time has become more concentrated on the present instant as the epicenter of time.³⁶ In many instances, the clock has completely integrated and subsumed the definition of time.³⁷ Finally, the precise rendering of time available through atomic clocks, coupled with recent discoveries in astronomy, cosmology and geology, has inadvertently diminished the significance of humanity within conventional time, thereby perpetuating a tidal shift in temporal awareness that is only beginning to be felt in literature, philosophy, society and other venues intricately related to the conventional understanding of time.³⁸

2.1.2. *Time as a Circle: Sacred versus Profane Time*

While a conventional understanding of time allowed humanity to portray its existence on a temporal triptych comprising past, present and future panels, it proved insufficient to answer the greater questions associated with essence, creation and cosmos. For this reason, humanity began to seek conceptions for time that grappled with these most eminent concerns. The second conception represents one of the earliest attempts in human history to move beyond a conventional view of time, and is still pervasive in various ideologies that populate the thoughts of

³⁴ Fagg, *Becoming*, 19.

³⁵ At the time of writing, the recognized standard time keeper in the world is the cesium atomic clock—in place since 1967. This clock measures time by counting the oscillations of emitted radiation from a cesium-133 atom in its transition between energy states; the atom oscillates at precisely 9,192,631,770 cycles per second, and is recognized as the *Système Internationale* (SI) second. The Bureau Internationale de l'Heure (BIH) coordinates the official world time from a mean of approximately eighty atomic clocks around the world; see Whitrow, *Time in History*, 168; and Fagg, *Becoming*, 69.

³⁶ As Paul Davies suggests, Westerners live their lives completely engrossed in the present when compared to other civilizations throughout history; see Davies, *About Time*, 70.

³⁷ Brian Greene goes so far as to define time as “that which is measured by clocks,” in order to avoid the necessary linguistic contortions in any attempt to define time; see Brian Greene, *The Elegant Universe: Superstrings, Hidden Dimensions, and the Quest for the Ultimate Theory* (London: Vintage, 1999), 37.

³⁸ Heise, *Chronoschisms*, 40.

humanity today. This conception views time as a circle and functions primarily to distinguish profane time—essentially the aforementioned conventional view of time—from sacred time.³⁹ However, viewing time as a circle is not limited to a distinctly religious context; instead, it is seen as an alternative, metaphysical approach to both the conventional conception and other modern conceptions.⁴⁰ Yet its context is always one that moves the observer from practical convention to experiential concomitance.⁴¹

In examining this conception of time, there are two major subsets to cover. The first is the tension between *sacred* versus *profane* time. Inextricably bound up with a circular understanding of time, sacred time differs in a qualitative, and not quantitative, manner from profane time; sacred time is the primordial, mythic experience outside of/greater than conventional time. According to Mircea Eliade, a pre-eminent scholar of mythic religions, an individual enters into sacred time primarily through the portal of re-enacted mythic ritual. Eliade writes that the brush with myth “takes man out of his own time—his individual, chronological, ‘historic’ time—and projects him, symbolically at least, into the Great Time, into a paradoxical instant which cannot be measured because it does not consist of duration.”⁴² We can best represent sacred time as a circle, as we will see below.

The second subset within this conception is the different variations of circular time, or so-called ‘cyclical time.’ While many understandings of sacred time involve a cyclical element, and temporal cyclicity is an integral segment of the time as a circle conception, cyclical time is not synonymous with either of these other concepts. Indeed, while cyclical time is one of only several interpretations of the conception of

³⁹ The use of the concepts ‘sacred time’ and ‘profane time’ are indebted to the considerable work of Mircea Eliade; see especially Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return: Or, Cosmos and History* (Bollingen 46; trans. Willard R. Trask; Princeton: Princeton University, 1991).

⁴⁰ For example, three modern instances of this conception of time include the well-known thoughts and works of Friedrich Nietzsche; the temporal understanding of individuals in abnormal mental states; see Karl Jaspers, *General Psychopathology* (trans. J. Hoening and Marian W. Hamilton; Manchester: Manchester University, 1963), 79–88, 107; as well as a scientific one based on the Theory of Relativity; see Kurt Gödel, “A Remark about the Relationship between Relativity Theory and Idealistic Philosophy,” in *Albert Einstein: Philosopher-Scientist* (3rd ed.; ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp; La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1970), 560–2.

⁴¹ Barbara C. Sproul, “Sacred Time,” in *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (vol. 12; ed. Mircea Eliade; New York: Macmillan, 1987), 541.

⁴² Mircea Eliade, “Observing Sacred Time,” *Parabola* 15:1 (1990): 22.

sacred time, people often use the term as an inaccurate catch-all phrase for the sacred conception. As an example, two of the ways in which sacred time can function in a circular fashion are *cyclical time* (properly defined) and *linear time with eternal recurrence*. In short, cyclical time is a recurring pattern of the same precise times, whereas linear time with eternal recurrence occurs when the same events repeat themselves in the same pattern at different times.⁴³ Unfortunately, writers often simply designate linear time with eternal recurrence as cyclical time. To add to the confusion is a third manner in which time functions as a circle: circular time interpreted as *closed time*. Closed time simply understands time as finite, having a simultaneous—yet not necessarily concurrent—beginning and end, with a unique relationship between past, present and future.⁴⁴ We may simplify this third conception for time as a circle through the use of a symbol that originates in antiquity but we still often find in the modern world. In fact, given the nature of this conception and its emphasis on sacred myth, a symbol is a very appropriate way to experience this particular view of time.⁴⁵ The symbol that best encapsulates this closed notion of time is an *ouroboros*. While we derive the English term for this symbol from the Greek, meaning ‘tail-devouring,’ the symbol originated in ancient Egypt. The *ouroboros* was shortly appropriated by the Greeks, later used by the Romans and especially post-patristic Christian heretical sects such as the Gnostics and Ophites,⁴⁶ and even found a home in the late medieval era arts of alchemy, hermetism, and heraldry.⁴⁷ In its most basic form, the *ouroboros* is a circle—which entails the idea of all time, all existence,

⁴³ Mark Reynolds offers a more detailed differentiation of these two cognate terms: “Let us look at a small boring example. If in some small boring universe state A changes into state B which changes into state C which changes into state A and this pattern has been and will be continuing indefinitely then there are two models of time which could be useful in describing the behaviour. We could say that time is like the integers and that at every time which is a multiple of three the universe is in state A, at the next time in state B and next in C. This is an example of linear time with eternal recurrence: the same things happen over and over again at different times and in the same pattern. Alternatively we could say that there are just three times *a*, *b* and *c*, that *a* precedes *b*, *b* precedes *c* and *c* precedes *a*, and that the universe is in state A at time *a*, B at *b* and C at *c*. This is an example of cyclical time”; see Mark Reynolds, “Axiomatisation and Decidability of *F* and *P* in Cyclical Time,” *JPL* 23:2 (1994): 198.

⁴⁴ W. H. Newton-Smith, *The Structure of Time* (London: Routledge, 1980), 66.

⁴⁵ As an example, Schuyler Brown advocates a return to the use of sacred symbols in lieu of conceptual interpretations for archetypal ideas; see Schuyler Brown, *Text and Psyche: Experiencing Scripture Today* (New York: Continuum, 1998), 88.

⁴⁶ For example, *Gos. Thom.* 18.

⁴⁷ Louis Charbonneau-Lassay, “The Ouroboros,” *Parabola* 15:1 (1990): 53.

or all possibilities.⁴⁸ While the progression of the centuries has laden the symbol with a myriad of meanings, the primary association made with the ouroboros was time. Specifically, it was a view of time that has no literal beginning and end, an unbroken whole mirroring eternity, “since it is the thread on which eternity is woven.”⁴⁹ In some respects, the ouroboros is enjoying somewhat of a renaissance in contemporary culture.

Returning to the circular conception of time as a whole, the origin of this view of time is lost in antiquity. In fact, many scholars of circular time—or one of its paradigmatic progeny such as cyclical time—believe that this understanding of time can be dated back to the dawn of mankind, and was perhaps the original view of time conceived by the human race.⁵⁰ While advocates base this thought primarily on archaeological evidence of extinct civilizations, another argument for this notion of time stems from anthropological research into the *Weltanschauung* of isolated people groups, which arguably reflects ancient temporal mores. In many instances, traditional civilizations tied the concept of the circular nature of time to the life and/or seasonal cycle. Eliade explains that

traditional societies conceive man’s temporal existence not only as an infinite repetition of certain archetypes and exemplary gestures, but also as an *eternal recommencement*; the world is successively created and destroyed, and the lunar symbolism of ‘birth-death-resurrection’ is present in a great many myths and rites.⁵¹

It is this eternal recommencement echoed in the life and seasonal cycles that propagated certain circular understandings of time.

Shifting from the dawn of civilization to antiquity, it was often celestial or terrestrial movements that precipitated circular temporalities. In ancient Egypt, the myth of Osiris, tied to the rising and the falling of the Nile as a source of life and fertility, contributed to an understanding of time as a succession of states.⁵² The Egyptians’ view of profane

⁴⁸ According to Carl Liungman, simple signs generally conceal paradoxical meanings; while the aforementioned ideas are attributed to circular symbols, the circle also represents zero, nothingness, or the lack of possibilities; see Carl G. Liungman, *Dictionary of Symbols* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 1991), 10.

⁴⁹ Charbonneau-Lassay, “Ouroboros,” 53.

⁵⁰ For example, Whitrow, *What is Time?*, 11.

⁵¹ Eliade, “Observing,” 27.

⁵² Whitrow, *Time in History*, 25.

time related to sacred time in that they envisioned a primordial, possibly idyllic, time in the past of their civilization; but beyond this, we can only speculate on the ancient Egyptians' comprehension of time.⁵³ Similarly, the Babylonians, recognized as experts in the field of astrology, relied upon the determinism of astronomical events in order to understand the relationship between humanity and deity, the profane and the sacred. Undoubtedly, this led to a circular view of time.⁵⁴ Likewise, Zoroastrianism espoused a circular view of time with the progression from profane to sacred characterized by a closed time loop.⁵⁵

In contrast, the temporal philosophies of the Greeks were more clear-cut, yet at the same time, more diverse. While different schools of Greek thought favored certain notions of temporality above others, the majority of early Greek philosophers understood time circularly,⁵⁶ as if they equated time with the revolution of a wheel.⁵⁷ In all probability, both Socrates (469–399 BC) and Plato (c. 429–347 BC) believed time was thoroughly cyclical—in this case, linear time with eternal recurrence.⁵⁸ This early Greek temporal cyclicity, with its emphasis on a return to the sacred Great Year, heavily influenced later Hellenic philosophical schools such as the Stoics and Neoplatonists.⁵⁹ The concept of the return to the Great Year served as the liaison that integrated the sacred and the

⁵³ An examination of relevant literature reveals sharp disagreements in the reformulation of Egyptian temporality by modern researchers; for example, Whitrow argues that the Egyptians had little sense of history while S. G. F. Brandon lists examples of precise historical annals created by their civilization; compare Whitrow, *Time in History*, 24–6, and S. G. F. Brandon, *History, Time and Deity* (Manchester: Manchester University, 1965), 66–9.

⁵⁴ Again, the pervasiveness of a distinctively cyclical view of time remains in doubt; see Whitrow, *Time in History*, 31; and Brandon, *History, Time and Deity*, 83.

⁵⁵ Mary Boyce notes that the Zoroastrian view of time is a closed cycle, moving from sacred to profane and through an otherwise “linear development to a once more changeless state”; see Mary Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism* (vol. 1; *Handbuch der Orientalistik*; Leiden: Brill, 1989), 230–2.

⁵⁶ It is interesting to note that with the exception of Polybius, most Greek historians paid little heed to a purely cyclical understanding of time; see Arnaldo Momigliano, “Time in Ancient Historiography,” *HTB* 6 (1966): 10.

⁵⁷ Fagg, *Becoming*, 15.

⁵⁸ In *Politics*, Plato espouses a cyclical view of the rule of the land; see Plato, *Politics*, 268d–274d; and cf. Eva T. H. Brann, “Plato,” in *Encyclopedia of Time* (GRLSS 810; ed. Samuel L. Macey; New York: Garland, 1994), 467–8.

⁵⁹ J. L. Russell, “Time in Christian Thought,” in *The Voices of Time: A Cooperative Survey of Man's Views of Time as Expressed by the Sciences and by the Humanities* (ed. J. T. Fraser; London: Penguin, 1968), 68.

circular;⁶⁰ in fact, by the Hellenistic age, time had evolved into a deity (Αἰών) and was often accorded the position of a judge.

One of the most intriguing sacred systems that adopts a circular view of time is Hinduism. While this temporal system dates to at least the 15th century BC, a substantial percentage of the global population still uses this system. As previously mentioned, cyclical time is somewhat of a misnomer, and is an inaccurate summarization of Hindu temporal thought. While there are various understandings of time in branches of Hinduism, we may best categorize Hindu temporality as composed of cosmological cycles.⁶¹ The whole of the Hindu view of time is divided into the *mahāyuga*, a complete cycle of time beginning with creation and ending in *pralaya*, dissolution. This cosmic cycle of creation, destruction and recreation imprisons the individual until such time as the profane is made sacred and Nirvāna is attained.⁶² In Hinduism, time is also sacred as it is often equated with Vishnu, and especially his avatar, Krisna. Similar to Vishnu, time is recognized as the creator, sustainer, and destroyer of the cosmos.⁶³ Other sacred systems, such as those of the ancient Mayas,⁶⁴ Aztecs, and Chinese, as well as aspects of Norse mythology⁶⁵ and even Judaism⁶⁶ contain temporal circularities.

Given the subject area for this work, the reader may remain skeptical of the relationship between the time as a circle conception and sacred time. After all, people regard Christianity as the primary proponent of 'linear' time in contrast to the 'cyclical' time of other religions.⁶⁷ In fact, perhaps one of the sharpest critics of cyclical time, as well as one of the foremost scholars of time, was the church father Augustine.

⁶⁰ W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* (vol. 3; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1962), 428.

⁶¹ Anindita Niyogi Balslev, "Time and the Hindu Experience," in *Religion and Time* (SHR 54; ed. Anindita Niyogi Balslev and J. N. Mohanty; Leiden: Brill, 1993), 170.

⁶² Eliade, "Observing," 24.

⁶³ Balslev, "Experience," 166.

⁶⁴ Peter Coveney and Roger Highfield, *The Arrow of Time: A Voyage through Science to Solve Time's Greatest Mystery* (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1990), 25.

⁶⁵ Richard Morris, *Time's Arrows: Scientific Attitudes Toward Time* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 22.

⁶⁶ Citing Eccl 1:9–10, Brandon claims that the Hebrew understanding of time was undoubtedly circular; see Brandon, *History, Time and Deity*, 4. As an interesting aside, the Hebrew concept of the Sabbath acts as a literal sacred time imposed after six days of the profane. Abraham Heschel makes a similar contrast between space and time, writing: "Six days a week we live under the tyranny of things of space; on the Sabbath we try to become attuned to holiness in time"; see Abraham J. Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: H. Wolff, 1951), 8.

⁶⁷ Whitrow, *Time in History*, 57.

Prior to his conversion to Christianity, Augustine was a Neoplatonist, and was influenced by the temporal notions of Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus. Yet one thing that makes Augustine's work vitally significant was his break with classical temporality.

On the one hand, Augustine vehemently criticized the cyclical—linear time with eternal recurrence—understanding of time propagated by Plato. While not naming any names, Augustine writes:

The pagan philosophers have introduced cycles of time in which the same things are in the order of nature being restored and repeated, and have asserted that these whirlings of past and future ages will go on unceasingly . . . [yet] it is only through the sound doctrine of a rectilinear course that we can escape from I know not what false cycles discovered by false and deceitful sages.⁶⁸

In the same way, Augustine criticized Aristotle's view of time⁶⁹ (which he held as the motion of celestial objects): "Let no man tell me that the motions of the heavenly bodies are time, because, when at the prayer of one the sun stood still, but time went on."⁷⁰ Nonetheless, Augustine's thought betrays a continuity with Aristotle's in that Augustine also affirmed that change is a necessary contingency of time. In moving away from a motion-based temporality, Augustine took the first step toward time as an absolute.⁷¹

On the other hand, Augustine was the founder of the study of the psychological component of time.⁷² This is not to say that Augustine regards time as imaginary; on the contrary, time as experienced by man is a reality that stands in sharp contrast to the eternity of God. Instead, Augustine posits that time is an extension of the mind.⁷³ In this way, the mind can observe the past, present, and future even though the past and future do not exist *as such*—the past exists in the mind as past, but when the mind's understanding of what is past truly exists, it is a present. This view is not synonymous with an 'eternal now' temporality; instead, moments outside the now exist as a function of God's eternity. Augustine eloquently summarizes his understanding of time as an extension of the human mind:

⁶⁸ Augustine, *City of God*, 12.14.

⁶⁹ We will cover Aristotle's view of time in more detail below.

⁷⁰ Augustine, *Confessions*, 11.23.

⁷¹ Turetzky, *Time*, 63.

⁷² Whitrow, *Time in History*, 64.

⁷³ Augustine, *Confessions*, 11.26.

There are three times; a present of things past, a present of things present, and a present of things future. For these three do somehow exist in the soul, and otherwise I see them not: present of things past, memory; present of things present, sight; present of things future, expectation.⁷⁴

Ultimately, the emphasis on time as a function of the human mind is an ingredient of Augustine's relating the profane to the sacred: human time becomes an integral element of the salvation narrative.⁷⁵

In light of Augustine's thought, and those theologians who followed, there has been strong opposition to any amount of circularity in the Christian expression of temporality. Within Western culture, this has precipitated an unfounded bifurcation between the temporalities of religions such as Christianity and Hinduism, attributing a strict linearity with the former and a strict cyclicity with the latter.⁷⁶ This has led to an impoverished view of sacred time within Christian thought. Within Hinduism, there are non-cyclical expanses of time: as each *mahāyuga* is composed of four *yuga* of successively shortening length, these *yuga* occur in succession with each other yet without a cyclic repetition among the four—each of the *yuga* is different in dharmic content.⁷⁷ Furthermore, the progression of the cosmic cycles within Hindu temporality betrays a distinct soteriological objective, in some ways not unlike the Christian view of time.⁷⁸

Ultimately, the present conception is an explication of sacred time, as opposed to profane time. While the time as a circle conception is useful in understanding Indo-Greek temporalities, it also is an effective category for a decidedly Christian temporality. Christian time is, in effect, circular; while it encompasses no true element of cyclicity or repetition, it is more appropriately *teleological* rather than linear.⁷⁹ The Christian concept of time is absolutely teleological and soteriological, and from the point of view of humanity, a movement from the profane to the sacred. It is not merely an unbounded axis.⁸⁰ Using the

⁷⁴ Augustine, *Confessions*, 11.20.

⁷⁵ Turetzky, *Time*, 62.

⁷⁶ J. N. Mohanty, "Introduction," in *Religion and Time* (SHR 54; ed. Anindita Niyogi Balslev and J. N. Mohanty; Leiden: Brill, 1993), 7.

⁷⁷ Anindita Niyogi Balslev, "Cosmology and Hindu Thought," *Ṛgion* 25 (1990), 49–52.

⁷⁸ Eliade, "Observing," 27.

⁷⁹ While silent on cyclicity, Brandon asserts that Christian temporality is teleological; see Brandon, *History, Time and Deity*, 1.

⁸⁰ Russell, "Time in Christian Thought," 68.

ouroboros as a conceptual symbol, we may liken the Christian notion of time to such a closed circle. It is not that the Christian view of time does or does not have an origin, or whether it ends or is swallowed by eternity, but that from humanity's perspective, time begins and ends in God. The head and tail of the ouroboros is the Alpha and the Omega of the temporality of the Christian God in Christ (Rev 1:8, 11, 21:6, 22:13); and the non-repetitive length of the serpent is the creation in time as it "groans and travails," moving from the profane to the sacred (Rom 8:22).⁸¹ The Fourth Gospel reflects the teleological nature of time, and this is an issue we will take up briefly in the second section of this work.

2.1.3. *Time as a Structure: The Philosophies of Time*

The next step along a favored axis in delineating various conceptions for the function of time is the notions afforded to time by the various philosophers and thinkers of humanity. Pausing for a moment, it appears obvious that an assimilation of the vastly divergent philosophies of time from the dawn of humanity to modernity would lack any conceivable continuity—as the Roman philosopher-statesman Seneca (c. 4 BC–AD 65) appropriately quips, "It is harder to get agreement between two philosophers than between two waterclocks."⁸² This is, in fact, true; and thus the conception for understanding the way time functions in the philosophies is time as a *structure*. With each successive generation of thinkers, a myriad of temporal systems theories are built upon the last—some are perhaps more original than others but all the product of human intellectual ingenuity.

While each of these philosophies of time is distinct, each of these philosophies marks an essential contribution to the whole of the structure. One may add a new addition to the vast body of philosophical literature on time, without a loss in shape or meaning—including our

⁸¹ Paul's use of κτίσις, creation, especially with the added τοῦ νῦν, has temporal overtones in Rom 8:22. Furthermore, κτίσις clearly includes the inanimate creation; see James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC 38; Dallas: Word, 1988), 472; and therefore would include time; (so Karl Barth equates, contrasting with that which is eternal), see Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns; London: Oxford, 1968), 310. Finally, Rom 1:20 supports a κτίσις with a temporal dimension; see C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (BNTC; London: Adam & Charles Black), 1957. If time is in fact a creation of God, then it is a part of God's κτίσις, and it groans for redemption (Rom 8:23).

⁸² Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis*, 2.2–3.

own present conception discussing the philosophical aspects of time. Furthermore, while there are occasionally additions to the structure of philosophical time that seem to be alienated and unrelated, most new additions are compatible and adjacent to each other.⁸³ In order to cover many of the major additions to the vast structure of philosophical time in an orderly fashion, we will examine classical and modern advocates from three of the more salient additions and contrast those with advocates at opposite ends of the structure. Finally, we will discuss several significant contributors to the philosophies of time, such as Augustine and Newton, at greater length in more pertinent conceptions.

While it is impossible to isolate the first Greek philosopher of time—especially because there is strong evidence for a developmental element—Parmenides (b. c. 515 BC) is arguably the first pre-Socratic philosopher to write on time,⁸⁴ as well as the first to question its existence. Unlike modern philosophers, Parmenides wrote in the manner of his time, and thus he actually recorded his thoughts on time as a poem rather than as an overt discourse. For this reason, there has been some disagreement by later commentators over Parmenides' ideas on time.⁸⁵ Yet most understand Parmenides as claiming that only the present *is*, and therefore past and future do not exist and subsequently are without meaning. The logical conclusion of such a notion of time is that time is unreal.⁸⁶ As previously mentioned, Zeno of Elea, the follower of Parmenides, contributed to the discussion with his logical

⁸³ Similar to the previous sections on the various conceptions of time, this section serves as an overview to the way in which time functions in one of its distinct subsets, and is by no means exhaustive. Aside from this, the primary caveat for this section is that while the discussion carries a decidedly Eurocentric flavor—considering mainly the temporal philosophies within the Western European tradition—this decision was pragmatic; the philosophies of time in other cultures are in many cases equally viable as those detailed below.

⁸⁴ Wright maintains that Parmenides was the first; see Wright, *Cosmology in Antiquity*, 126.

⁸⁵ For example, Richard Sorabji identifies eight distinct interpretations of Parmenides' view of time; however, we should note that Sorabji concludes with the majority view, of which I am in agreement; see Richard Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum* (London: Duckworth, 1983), 99–108.

⁸⁶ Turetzky, *Time*, 10; and contra Peter Manchester, *The Syntax of Time: The Phenomenology of Time in Greek Physics and Speculative Logic from Iamblichus to Anaximander* (SPNPT 2; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 109, 128. In many ways, Parmenides' thoughts on time foreshadowed a foundational plank of Plato's philosophy, in that Parmenides held to a bifurcation of worlds: a world of visual appearances that included time and change and the perfect world of reality that existed without change; see Whitrow, *Time in History*, 40.

paradoxes—an attempt to demonstrate that time is inherently irrational and thus unreal. Finally, the Syracusan mathematician, inventor, and founder of the scientific field of statics, Archimedes (c. 287–211 BC), eliminated time as an inchoate feature of the natural world and denied that temporal flux was at the heart of physical processes.⁸⁷

In contrast to the view of time held by Parmenides, Zeno and Archimedes, Heraclitus (c. 540–480 BC) argued that time was indeed real, and was in fact an essential element of the never-constant cosmos.⁸⁸ We should note at this point that time in the ancient world was in many instances equated with or moored to the concept of change and/or motion; thus while Parmenides denied change, and therefore time (seeing both as illusory), Heraclitus maintained that change, and therefore time, is the essence of reality.⁸⁹ This idea is inherent within Heraclitus' aphorism on change: "You cannot step twice into the same river; for fresh waters are ever flowing in upon you."⁹⁰ Similarly, the Athenian philosopher Plato also sanctioned the notion that time is real,⁹¹ even while redefining the nature of reality by bifurcating it into static and dynamic forms. As is widely recognized, Plato maintained that reality, and anything occupying a spatial dimension within reality, is really a dichotomized entity comprising a pure form as well as an individual manifestation of that pure form.⁹² Therefore, in his *Timaeus*, Plato defines time in this way:

The nature of the Living Being was eternal, and it was not possible to bestow this attribute fully on the created universe; but he determined to make a moving image of eternity, and so when he ordered the heavens he made in that which we call time an eternal moving image of the

⁸⁷ In this way, Archimedes was a predecessor of many physical scientists who have tried with varied success to remove time as a variable from equations within the physical sciences—his work, *On the Equilibrium of Planes*, succeeds in "reducing a branch of physics to a branch of geometry, but the concept of time played no part in it"; see Whitrow, *Natural Philosophy*, 1.

⁸⁸ Murad D. Akhundov, *Conceptions of Space and Time: Sources, Evolution, Directions* (Cambridge: MIT, 1986), 64–7; and Manchester, *Syntax of Time*, 148–9.

⁸⁹ A. Cornelius Benjamin, "Ideas of Time in the History of Philosophy," in *The Voices of Time: A Cooperative Survey of Man's Views of Time as Expressed by the Sciences and by the Humanities* (ed. J. T. Fraser; London: Penguin, 1968), 9.

⁹⁰ Plutarch, *On the 'E' at Delphi*, 18; and because Heraclitus' works exist only as fragments, also see Charles H. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus: An Edition of the Fragments with Translation and Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1979), 52–3, 166–9.

⁹¹ Turetzky, *Time*, 11–7.

⁹² Plato, *Timaeus*, 51–2.

eternity which remains for ever at one. For before the heavens came into being there were no days or nights or months or years, but he devised and brought them into being at the same time that the heavens were put together; for they are all parts of time, just as past and future are also forms of it, which we wrongly attribute, without thinking, to the Eternal Being.⁹³

Thus time, created by the Demiurge,⁹⁴ in many ways connects this mundane world and the eternal forms,⁹⁵ and as the “moving image of eternity” is best understood in light of the circular motions of the celestial bodies.⁹⁶ This belief in the relationship between time and motion served as a point of contention between Plato and later philosophers, notably his pupil Aristotle. However, both Plato and Aristotle were ultimately in agreement with Heraclitus that time does in fact exist.

As can be seen, the *reality* and *unreality* of time stand as two extremely consequential, opposing sides of the philosophies of time structure.⁹⁷ The philosophical polemic over the existence of time has continued from these early proponents down through the centuries, with advocates of both sides arguing their cases in various manners and with various motives. For example, while the adherents to Scepticism, notably Sextus Empiricus (*c.* AD 200), expounded and elaborated on the arguments for the unreality of time,⁹⁸ their motives were more inclined toward promulgating a non-decisive enlightenment rather than eradicating the idea of time.⁹⁹ In contrast, the rapid advances in the physical sciences coupled with the increased precision of artificial timepieces starting in the late medieval era encouraged a realistic outlook on time—time could now be accurately measured and calculated into the physical laws of the universe. This was the time of René Descartes, Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) and Isaac Newton (1642–1727), for example. However, with the exception of notable thinkers such as Henri Bergson and Alfred North Whitehead, most contemporary philosophers deny the existence

⁹³ Plato, *Timaeus*, 37d–e (Lee).

⁹⁴ Plato’s argument that time was created, and thus has a beginning, was a sharp departure from other pre-Socratic thinkers; see Turetzky, *Time*, 16.

⁹⁵ The fact that Plato’s time serves as a conduit between the world of the senses and the otherworld of perfect forms echoes the previous paradigm describing the move from conventional time to sacred time.

⁹⁶ Whitrow, *Time in History*, 41.

⁹⁷ Cf. Whitrow, *Natural Philosophy*, 1.

⁹⁸ For example, see Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, 3.102–8, 136–50.

⁹⁹ Turetzky, *Time*, 30–4.

of time, possibly as a reaction to the hegemony of the Newtonian absolute time system that underscores the modern period.

While the ranks of those who dispute the reality of time have swollen in the 20th century, no work has been more significant than that of J. M. E. McTaggart (1866–1925). In his 1908 article, “The Unreality of Time,”¹⁰⁰ McTaggart went farther than most philosophers do by claiming (and offering a strong and detailed explanation) that not only was time unreal, time was also illegitimately conceived.¹⁰¹ The basic premise for his argument is that it is contradictory to assert that an event can exist as past, present, and future states; for example, the nailing of Martin Luther’s Ninety-Five Theses to the Schlosskirche door at Wittenberg on 31 October 1517 is a future event to the early Christian community, a present event for Luther, and a past event to the present reader—a notion which McTaggart maintains is logically inconsistent. At the heart of the matter is the enigmatically transitional, flowing nature of time.

McTaggart’s greatest contribution to the philosophical study of time was undoubtedly the way in which he approached the seemingly logical inconsistency of a time that flows. Taking cues from the dynamic and static natures of time, McTaggart believed we could identify time in two main series: an *A* series and a *B* series. Simply put, McTaggart’s *A* series is a dynamic temporal sequence that defines time in the way in which it is experienced through the subjective lens of the now: once future, now present, then past. It is the series of time in flux. In contrast, the *B* series is a static description of a temporal sequence—the only information gleaned from a *B* series sequence is whether an event is before or after another event (“Unreality,” 24). Therefore, words such as ‘past,’ ‘present,’ ‘future,’ ‘yesterday,’ ‘tomorrow,’ ‘soon,’ and ‘now’ as well as tenses such as ‘was,’ ‘is,’ and ‘will be,’ refer to the *A* series while terms such as ‘before,’ ‘after,’ ‘earlier,’ ‘simultaneous,’ ‘later,’ and even ‘31 October 1517,’ are indicative of the *B* series.¹⁰² When applied, “the *A* series generally characterizes the temporal experience

¹⁰⁰ J. M. E. McTaggart, “The Unreality of Time,” *Mind* 17 (1908): 457–74; for a more recent and more accessible restatement of the argument see J. M. E. McTaggart, “The Unreality of Time,” in *The Philosophy of Time* (Oxford Readings in Philosophy; ed. Robin Le Poidevin and Murray MacBeath; Oxford: Oxford University, 1993), 23–34. All references are from this reprinted edition, hereafter cited in the text.

¹⁰¹ Whitrow, *Natural Philosophy*, 347.

¹⁰² Sorabji, *Continuum*, 33.

sensed by human consciousness, while the *B* series usually comes into play in objective observations, such as recording history or making theoretical predictions in the physical sciences [*italics added*].”¹⁰³ While McTaggart’s theory of time holds there are two competing sequences, it also maintains there is but one type of temporal position: the event. In contrast to atomistic theories of time,¹⁰⁴ McTaggart concluded that an event in time was not a single point, but instead comprised the content in a given interval of time;¹⁰⁵ in his words, “the contents of any position in time form an event” (“Unreality,” 24).

In light of his notions about time, McTaggart’s argument for the unreality of time hinges on two ideas. First, McTaggart asserts that time cannot exist without change, and vice versa: “There could be no time if nothing changed” (“Unreality,” 25). Therefore, since change is not essential to a *B* series of time—due to its static nature—time must include an *A* series. Second, an *A* series is in essence a logical contradiction: past, present and future are mutually exclusive temporal states, and therefore it is a contradiction to maintain that a given event can exist as more than one of these states (“Unreality,” 34). While scholars have thoroughly criticized McTaggart’s thoughts on time in later years,¹⁰⁶ it is important to note that both ancients such as Zeno and moderns such as McTaggart gravitate toward the impeccably paradoxical nature of time. Finally, McTaggart’s work on the *A* and *B* series of time proves a useful reference and counterpoint to the analysis of the temporal mechanics of the Fourth Gospel.

Progressing forward within the philosophical conception of time, a second significant polarity of thought on time is between the *continuous* and *discrete* natures of time. Briefly, a discrete or atomistic view of time maintains that time is composed of indivisible, finite elements, or ‘time-atoms,’ whereas a continuous view of time sees time as an infinitely divisible continuum. While temporal atomism was arguably

¹⁰³ Fagg, *Becoming*, 127.

¹⁰⁴ Please see below.

¹⁰⁵ According to Turetzky, “McTaggart defines an event as the content of a temporal position (a moment),” whereas D. H. Mellor extrapolates that to McTaggart, events “are not points—i.e. instantaneous moments of past, present or future time—but intervals of such moments, stretching (at least) from the start of the events to their end”; see Turetzky, *Time*, 122; and D. H. Mellor, *Real Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1981), 15, respectively.

¹⁰⁶ See especially C. D. Broad, *An Examination of McTaggart’s Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1938); Ferrel Christensen, “McTaggart’s Paradox and the Nature of Time,” *PQ* 24:97 (1974): 289–99; and Mellor, *Real Time*.

implicit in the writings of pre-Aristotelian philosophers, this idea about time probably arose more in response to Aristotle's rebuttal of atomism in general rather than in any explicit mention in the works of early abstract atomists such as Leucippus (c. 5th century BC) or Democritus of Abdera (c. 460–356 BC), or possibly even the works of Plato or Xenocrates (c. 395–314 BC).¹⁰⁷ Following and in contrast to Aristotle, Epicurus (341–270 BC), the founder of Epicurean philosophy, formally proposed the atomism of time.¹⁰⁸ The Epicurean philosophy presented an advanced atomic theory of time based on dual strata for demarcating time: perceivable and conceivable time. With each strata bounded by the minima—in other words, a time less than the minimally *perceivable* is nonetheless a fully *conceivable* time—Epicurus held that an atom of time was the minimally conceivable duration of time.

In contrast to the Epicureans, Stoic thinkers weighed in with their arguments in favor of time as an infinitely divisible continuum. The founder of the Stoic school, Zeno of Citium (c. 335–263 BC), defined time as a continuous extension of movement, and this idea was further developed by the third head of the *Stoa*, Chrysippus (c. 280–207 BC). Unlike Aristotle's theory of time, the Stoics maintained that fixed points in time—along the continuum—did not exist. Furthermore, their idea of time as a continuum was thoroughly encapsulated in their deterministic, cosmic cycle of eternal recurrence. Nonetheless, Stoicism offered at least one other significant contribution to the study of time: the idea that time may be composed of more than one ontological reality.¹⁰⁹

Since the Hellenic philosophers, there have been few proponents of atomistic time; a majority of thinkers have viewed time as a continuum.¹¹⁰ Two groups of advocates, however, warrant brief mention. In the first instance, temporal atomicity was regularly revived every century or so throughout the medieval era by philosophers with mid-Eastern affinities. Atomism appeared among early Islamic scholars, such as in the works of Abu l-Hudhayl al-'Allaf (d. c. 841), Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1058–1111), and according to the later Arabian Jew Moses Maimonides (1135–1204), even among members of the Mutakallimun,

¹⁰⁷ See Aristotle, *Physics*, 6.1–4, 10; and Sorabji, *Continuum*, 350, respectively.

¹⁰⁸ Epicurus, *Letter to Herodotus*.

¹⁰⁹ Turetzky, *Time*, 38–42.

¹¹⁰ Sandra Rosenthal dissents and argues that a type of atomistic thinking about time has held sway throughout the modern era; see Sandra B. Rosenthal, "Scientific Time and Temporal Experience: Pragmatism's Contribution to the Search for a Synthesis," *KronoScope* 2:2 (2002): 168–9.

the theological partisans of *kalam*. Although himself a Jewish philosopher, Maimonides advocated a rather complex yet discrete view of time,¹¹¹ arguing that except for the perpetually regenerative intervention of God, the cosmos would only exist in one indivisible atom of time. The atomization in time was also a component of a number of continental philosophers such as Joannes Canonicus (*fl.* 1329), Nicholas Bonet (*d.* 1360), and the Franciscan monk Bartholomaeus Anglicus (*c.* 13th century).¹¹² In all probability, these atomists of the medieval era were probably influenced by both the whole of extant Hellenic thought as well as various Indian philosophies.¹¹³

The second group of advocates of discrete time has only very recently appeared on the philosophical landscape, coming after the advent of the sub-field of physics known as quantum mechanics. These quantum discoveries introduced the quantization of the energy of the electron, which led atomistic proponents such as physicist David Finkelstein to argue that time also quantizes into a *chronon*, or quanta of time. This theory proposes that a quantum of time is equivalent to the time necessary for a quantum event to occur—such as a transition of an electron from one orbital to another. Yet in light of Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle, such an event is inherently indefinite in nature. Atomistic physicists have also proposed that a chronon represent the smallest interval of space known to exist, which would allow for an interval of 10^{-24} seconds, or one million million million millionth of a second.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ In his aptly-named work, Maimonides writes that “time is composed of time-atoms, i.e. of many parts, which on account of their short duration cannot be divided...An hour is, e.g., divided into sixty minutes, the minute into sixty seconds, the second into sixty parts, and so on; at least after ten or more successive divisions by sixty, time-elements are obtained which are not subjected to division, and in fact are indivisible”; see Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, 1.73 (Friedlander).

¹¹² Unlike the seemingly metrical breakdown of time by Maimonides, Bartholomaeus was more creative: in his popular encyclopedia *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, Bartholomaeus apportioned 24 hours for each day, with each day divided into four quadrants, each quadrant divided into six hours, and divided each of these hours into four points, each of these points into ten moments, each of these moments into 12 ounces, and each of these ounces into 47 atoms (which are indivisible). Thus, while Maimonides extrapolated the existence of at least 60^{10} time-atoms in an hour, Bartholomaeus argued for only 22,560 time-atoms per hour—a mere 6.27 atoms per second; see Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *On the Properties of Things*, 9.21.

¹¹³ For further discussion, see Sorabji, *Continuum*, 398–400; and Whitrow, *Natural Philosophy*, 202.

¹¹⁴ Clifford A. Pickover, *Time: A Traveller’s Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1998), 86.

In the end, there is little evidence or support for such a theory, and it has not been widely received.¹¹⁵

Finally, the third set of diametrically-opposed philosophies of time considers the *objectivity* or *subjectivity* of time. This philosophical paradox between objective and subjective time is often rooted in the relationship between time and the observer. In general, an objective view of time is one that is fixed and unchanging in regard to the observer, whereas the subjective view of time is just that—subjective, and its meaning or ontological character is based upon the one who is experiencing time. In most cases, objective philosophies of time coexist with a realist view of time,¹¹⁶ and the most prominent combination of these two philosophical notions of time resulted in the absolute view of time (which we will discuss in greater detail in the following section).

Unlike an objective view of time, the very nature of a subjective view of time breeds a multiplicity of interpretations through a multiplicity of interpreters. Since the majority of philosophers in antiquity were more interested in an objective, or at least non-personal, understanding of time, the world would wait until well after the height of Greek philosophy for the focus to shift to the subjective nature of time. As the classical world of antiquity was drawing to a close and its influence waning, Neoplatonism began to overshadow the philosophical world—including the study of time. Plotinus (AD 205–269/70), who for all intents and purposes is recognized as the founder of Neoplatonism, defines time as “the Life of the Soul in movement as it passes from one stage or act of experience to another.”¹¹⁷ Much like his philosophical predecessor Plato, Plotinus held to a successive manifestation of reality, yet differed from Plato by locating time within the existence of the World Soul rather than implicit within the mundane world of appearances. To Plotinus, humans experience time pantheistically, conjoined to the World Soul.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, he was also quick to criticize Aristotle’s notion that time is the number which measures motion, and instead

¹¹⁵ Scientists regularly experiment on time scales of a hundred-trillion-trillionth of a second—several times smaller than the proposed chronon’s duration—with no indications of temporal discontinuity; see Davies, *About Time*, 187.

¹¹⁶ One possible exception to this may be the Sceptics, who argued against the reality of time, but in doing so always maintained the objectivity of time.

¹¹⁷ Plotinus, *Ennead*, 3.7.11.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

postulated that motion is ultimately spatial rather than temporal.¹¹⁹ However, Plotinus' most significant contribution to the study of time was perhaps his focus on time as a personal, psychological phenomenon—a tangent that was summarily developed by Augustine.¹²⁰

Late Neoplatonism yielded another significant addition to the philosophical study of time in the thoughts and works of Iamblichus (c. AD 250–325). Iamblichus discarded Plotinus' idea that time was the life of the World Soul, and instead posited time as a transitional level between the Platonic world of forms and appearances. Unlike Plato and Plotinus, who essentially affirmed an integral view of time manifested in multiple hypostases of reality, Iamblichus went a step further and viewed time as its own hypostasis bifurcated between the worlds of forms and appearances. In doing so, he surmised that there was a static time on the edge of the eternal world juxtaposed with a dynamic time at the height of the material world.¹²¹ While there is disagreement as to whether Iamblichus' bifurcation of time does indeed anticipate a modern understanding of static and flowing time,¹²² it does represent the first major attempt to solve the quandary of time through dichotomous representation—an aforementioned idea that proved significant in the modern era.

In light of the emphasis philosophers placed on a personal, subjective notion of time espoused by Plotinus, Iamblichus, and especially Augustine, the study of time moved away from the examination of external data and toward the introspection of the internal workings of the mind. As the 20th century physicist Kurt Gödel stated, “For the physical world, the four dimensions are natural. But for the mind, there is no such natural coordinate system; time is the only natural frame of

¹¹⁹ Turetzky, *Time*, 44.

¹²⁰ While Plotinus was most influenced by Plato, he was also heavily influenced by Indo-Persian mysticism that furthered his interest in the place of time within the individual; see Fagg, *Becoming*, 17.

¹²¹ Turetzky, *Time*, 51–2.

¹²² First, several philosophers prior to Iamblichus, such as Archytas and Plato, noted distinctions in the nature of time; even Iamblichus suggests that Archytas was the first to distinguish between the competing natures of time. Second, and more significantly, there is little evidence to suggest that Iamblichus (or for that matter, Archytas) fully grasped the significance or ramifications—as evidenced in modern thought—of a bifurcated view of time. For a more detailed discussion, see Sorabji, *Continuum*, 42–5; cf. Simplicius, *Corollary on Time*, 787.30–5; 788.5–10; 788.29–35.

reference.”¹²³ Contrary to Plotinus and Iamblichus, who located time subjectively as or within a manifestation of God, Augustine and later thinkers increasingly recognized time as the natural coordinate system for human life.

By the early years of the 18th century, Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646–1716) postulated a subjective theory of time that became widely known as the relational theory of time. Leibniz’s notions about time began with his understanding of the monad, a term originating from Pythagorean philosophy but given new life in Leibniz’s hands. To him, a monad was not merely the elemental ontological unit, the primordial substance of which all existents are made, but also an extensionless center of force that serves as the center of feeling, apperception, and perception as well.¹²⁴ Because Leibniz, the intellectual and scientific arch-nemesis of Newton, rejected absolute and objective time as logically contradictory,¹²⁵ he therefore postulated that time was the ordered relation between the manifestations of monads within events in the natural universe. In other words, because phenomena must be ordered, and consistently and comprehensively interrelated with every other phenomenon, or be rendered meaningless, time is simply the way in which the human mind perceives the ordering of phenomena.

Perhaps the strongest proponent of subjective time is the German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). Coming to philosophical prominence in the wake of the temporal proposals of Leibniz and Newton, Kant was heavily influenced by the thought of both men—specifically the ontology of Leibniz and the science of Newton¹²⁶—and his thoughts are often viewed as a middle position.¹²⁷ Similar to Leibniz, Kant recognized that time occupied a significant ontological position; but similar to Newton, Kant affirmed the mathematical objectivity and

¹²³ A quote from a conversation recorded in Hao Wang, “Time in Philosophy and in Physics: From Kant and Einstein to Gödel,” *Synthese* 102:2 (1995): 215.

¹²⁴ William L. Reese, *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion: Eastern and Western Thought* (Atlantic Highlands, N. J.: Humanities, 1980), 298–9.

¹²⁵ Leibniz argued that an objective and/or absolute theory of time would contradict several principles of logic; namely the principle of sufficient reason, the identity of indiscernibles, and the foundational idea that God is the only infinite substance; see Turetzky, *Time*, 79–81.

¹²⁶ While Kant started his academic career much more within the scope of a Leibnizian theory of time and science, he eventually found himself upholding more of a Newtonian view as the years progressed; see Sadik J. Al-Azm, *Kant’s Theory of Time* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1967), 1–3, 22.

¹²⁷ Turetzky, *Time*, 86.

structure of space and time—yet still rejected an absolute, Newtonian view of time. Kant's unique epistemology held that empirical experience limits all knowledge but that not all knowledge is acquired through empirical experience. According to Kant, for us to acquire any knowledge whatsoever, several parameters must be in place *a priori*. We must afford time an *a priori* position as it is an element of transcendental knowledge, but is also empirically real in that the temporal succession of physical objects is real and not illusionary.¹²⁸ Due to the continual successions of the present now, time is always in a state of flux.¹²⁹

In his *Dissertation*, Kant writes, "Time is not something objective. It is neither substance nor accident nor relation, but is a subjective condition, necessary owing to the nature of the human mind, of the coordinating of all sensibles according to fixed law."¹³⁰ Therefore, in Kant's view, time is not an object that exists in its own right; time is subjective—time cannot exist apart from human experience, and is thus the mental framework for ordering physical existence. Yet what is so significant about Kant's thought is that he completes the subversion of movement to time begun centuries prior:

Over several centuries, from the Greeks to Kant, a revolution took place in philosophy: the subordination of time to movement was reversed, time ceases to be the measurement of normal movement, it increasingly appears for itself . . . time is no longer subordinate to movement, but rather movement to time.¹³¹

By the 20th century, subjective time was often afforded a seat of honor at the philosopher's table, and to thinkers such as the deconstructionist Jacques Derrida and the phenomenologist Martin Heidegger (1884–1976), the role of time was far more ontological than truly temporal.¹³² In fact, in Heidegger's investigation of the different modes of existence, the *Dasein*, or being-in-the-world, is distinguished *ontologically* from more or less authentic existences by time itself.¹³³ To Heidegger, time occu-

¹²⁸ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A31–6/B46–53.

¹²⁹ Ibid., B291; A163/B203–4.

¹³⁰ Kant, *Dissertation*, H56.

¹³¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties* (trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1984), xi.

¹³² David Wood, *The Deconstruction of Time* (Atlantic Highlands, N. J.: Humanities Press International, 1989), 13.

¹³³ Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (trans. Albert Hofstadter; Bloomington: Indiana University, 1982), 227–228; see also Martin Heidegger, *The Concept of Time* (trans. William McNeill; Oxford: Blackwell, 1992).

pies the core of, and pattern for, mundane existence. In this way, the philosophies of time have—to borrow a phrase from another conception—come full circle: beginning with the complete non-existence of time in the thought of the ancient Parmenides to the existential idea that time is the kernel of existence espoused by Heidegger, the morass of the philosophies of time stand in stark contrast to the simple, absolute time of a man named Newton.

2.1.4. *Time as an Axis: Newton's Absolute Time*

Unlike the nebulous nature of the many philosophies attributed to time, the concept of time that has dominated the West for more than five centuries is absolutely concrete in nature. While the first conception of time related time to conventional views, and the second related time to the sacred, and finally the third to the temporality of the human mind, the fourth conception relates time to motion: the movement of objects, from falling apples to the orbits of heavenly bodies. This conception for time originated in general as a result of humanity's attempt to understand the universe, primarily through physics, mathematics, and astronomy, and specifically in order to discern the motion of the sun, moon, planets and stars.

In mooring time to motion, this idea of time often adopts the mechanistic nature of physical motion. Because motion is plotted geometrically on a three-dimensional, spatial coordinate system, based around the x , y , and z axes, this conception of time views time as a similar geometric axis composed of points of time. Thus, the fourth category for the function of time is time as an axis. Among the proponents of absolute and axial time, no two are greater than Aristotle and Newton. Stephen Hawking, the most prominent astrophysicist in the second half of the 20th century, explains: "Both Aristotle and Newton believed in absolute time. That is, they believed that one could unambiguously measure the interval of time between two events, and that this time would be the same whoever measured it, provided they used a good clock."¹³⁴ Absolute time transforms a timepiece into a measuring stick, and enables one to plot duration on an axis as easily as length, width, or depth.

Trained in the shadow of Plato and the combined wisdom of the Academy, Aristotle's thought on time was in many ways a departure from earlier Greek thought. In general, Aristotle rejected the

¹³⁴ Stephen W. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (New York: Bantam, 1998), 18.

cosmological background and macroscopic conclusions afforded to time in the thoughts of philosophers such as Plato. His rejection also led to the collapse of the idea that we may equate time with any one motion or event.¹³⁵ More specifically, Aristotle revolutionized the study of time—at least to this point in history—by focusing on local phenomena rather than universal principles. This ‘bottom-up’ approach emphasized the role of time in small-scale, observable phenomena, and produced the first empirical, scientific treatment of time.¹³⁶ Finally, while Aristotle proposed an objective and absolute view of time, he argued that time would not exist without conscious beings to witness the temporal succession of phenomena. While we can trace this idea back in germinal form to the work of Antiphon,¹³⁷ Aristotle’s expanded emphasis on the soul influenced later philosophers such as Augustine and Leibniz.

It is necessary to recognize the ramifications of Aristotle’s priorities prior to describing his views on time.¹³⁸ His interest in the physics of local bodies—as opposed to heavenly ones—is the true heart of his *Physics*, and not the nature of time. To Aristotle, motion is more fundamental than time, and not vice versa as it is in the modern mindset. In fact, in order to provide an exacting definition of motion, Aristotle develops his ideas about time as well as several other concepts: continuum, infinity, place and void.¹³⁹ In light of this, Aristotle defines time in this manner:

We recognise time when we set boundaries to motion, bounding it by before and after. And we say that time has elapsed when we take notice of the before and after in motion. . . . But when we perceive a before and after, then we say there is time. For this is what time is: the number of motion in respect of before and after. So time is not motion, but exists in so far as motion contains number (*Physics*, 4.11).

While Aristotle argues that time is “the number of motion in respect to before and after” (*Physics*, 4.11), there has been a great discussion

¹³⁵ Whitrow, *Time in History*, 42.

¹³⁶ Turetzky, *Time*, 18.

¹³⁷ Guthrie, *Greek Philosophy*, 3:292.

¹³⁸ It should be mentioned that Aristotle’s view of time outlined in this section is derived solely from his physical theories of time, and is not in any way connected with his *Poetics*; for a more detailed view of Aristotle’s understanding of time and plot within narrative, see the section entitled “Emplotment: A Reading of Aristotle’s *Poetics*,” in Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 1:31–51.

¹³⁹ Aristotle, *Physics*, 3.1 (hereafter cited in the text).

of his definition over the last two millennia,¹⁴⁰ focusing on certain key words: number, motion, and before and after.

In defining time as the number of motion, Aristotle sees time as a mechanism for counting motion, and does not equate time with the measurement itself. In other words, “we call ‘number’ both what is counted and that with which we count, [but] time is what is counted and not that with which we count” (*Physics*, 4.11). Furthermore, when Aristotle uses time to count motion, he does not limit the idea to simply observable, physical motion. In fact, time to Aristotle is the number of any change, not just physical motion (*Physics*, 4.14). Time and change are so intertwined in the thought of Aristotle as to be in many instances reciprocal (*Physics*, 4.12).

Finally, when Aristotle defines time as the number of the before and after, he is using the ‘before’ and ‘after’ terms not so much temporally as he is spatially (*Physics*, 4.6). In observing physical motion, Aristotle developed his notions about time from these changes; for example, a weight dropped from a tower can be seen in its before state (at rest at the top of the tower) and after state (at rest on the ground). These before and after states become the boundary for the number of change, or time.¹⁴¹ In retrospect, Aristotle’s ideas are close to viewing time as an absolute axis by which events can be measured, and there is even one section of his writing that infers this pre-Newtonian, geometrical quality to time (*Physics*, 4.12, 7.1–5).¹⁴²

Further promoting a view of time that in many ways foreshadows Newton’s absolute time is Aristotle’s theory on the makeup of time. In Aristotle’s view, time is a continuum that is composed of nows (*Physics*, 6.1).¹⁴³ These ‘nows’ are an indivisible point of time *without* duration.¹⁴⁴ Philip Turetzky explains:

¹⁴⁰ Including a certain degree of disagreements; see for example, Sorabji, *Continuum*, 87.

¹⁴¹ Irwin C. Lieb, *Past, Present and Future: A Philosophical Essay about Time* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1991), 56.

¹⁴² See also Whitrow, *Natural Philosophy*, 181.

¹⁴³ See also Turetzky, *Time*, 18; and Tamar Rudavsky, “Creation and Time in Maimonides and Gersonides,” in *God and Creation: An Ecumenical Symposium* (ed. David B. Burrell and Bernard McGinn; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1990), 135. In contrast, Aristotle states in his *Metaphysics* that one revolution of the fixed stars is the unit of time; however, this is arguably his response to his paradoxical belief in both an infinite time and a finite limit to rectilinear motion; see Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 10.1.

¹⁴⁴ Turetzky, *Time*, 24; and David Bostock, “Aristotle’s Account of Time,” in *Aristotle: Critical Assessments* (vol. 2; *Physics, Cosmology, and Biology*; ed. Lloyd P. Gerson; London: Routledge, 1999), 147, respectively.

While there is a succession of nows in the continuum of time, the now is analogous to a point on a line. As a line cannot be made up of points, time cannot be made up of nows. Neither two points nor two nows can be next to one another; for between any two points or nows there exist an indefinite number of points or nows.¹⁴⁵

In other words, time to Aristotle is similar to a line that can be infinitely subdivided, but is segregated by means of a durationless now that in many ways serves as an ordinal number and temporal marker of the time axis. These ideas are significant from an absolute perspective of time, because Aristotle stands as the philosophical forerunner of the idea that one can plot time as on a spatial coordinate system.

Not only does Aristotle's understanding of the nature of time, as well as the basic element of time, the now, resemble a prefiguration of Newton's absolute time, so too does Aristotle's view of the extension of time. Contrary to Plato, but similar to many ancient Greek metaphysicians, Aristotle believed that time was infinite: without beginning or end (*Physics*, 4.13). However, his view of infinity was unique among the ancients. Aristotle defined infinity as a succession of the finite. In other words, time is not infinite because it is unbounded, but because for every now—a finite entity—that exists, there is always a now that both precedes and follows it.¹⁴⁶ Aristotle's notion of infinity seems almost modern, when contrasted with the idea of compounding finite numbers to approach a mathematical limit.¹⁴⁷ Oddly enough, it is this understanding of limits that was instrumental to the discovery of the mathematical field of calculus—by none other than Newton (and contemporaneously, Leibniz).

Even though Aristotle understood time to be without beginning and end, his description of it was more commonplace for his place in history. Like most ancients, his thoughts still reflect a strong affinity for astronomy and cosmology. In his work, *On the Sky*, Aristotle contrasts the eternality of the heavens and the Earth itself with the finite existences of those who dwelt on the Earth.¹⁴⁸ While Aristotle rejected the otherwise dominant idea of eternal recurrence, he still described time as circu-

¹⁴⁵ Turetzky, *Time*, 23; and cf. Bostock, "Aristotle's Account of Time," 154. For Aristotle's account, see Aristotle, *Physics*, 6.1.

¹⁴⁶ For his general definition of infinity, see Aristotle, *Physics*, 3.5–7.

¹⁴⁷ Sorabji, *Continuum*, 210.

¹⁴⁸ Aristotle, *On the Sky*, 2.1.

lar.¹⁴⁹ Yet his reasoning for doing so is actually quite simple. Aristotle on one hand believed that time was infinite, but on the other, did not believe in the possibility of an unbounded rectilinear line. Therefore, the only solution to this quandary for Aristotle was to propose that time progressed as along the infinite extension of a circle. The greatest circle Aristotle could imagine was the revolution of the heavens, and this he used for a description of time in his *Metaphysics*.¹⁵⁰ Again, while one cannot read too many modern ideas into Aristotle's view of time, it is interesting to note that infinity based upon circularity theories have become popular in some areas of 20th century cosmology.¹⁵¹

In conclusion, it is nearly impossible to over-emphasize Aristotle's role in the development of the scientific and philosophical study of time. His thoughts on time had a profound impact on those of Plotinus, Augustine, Leibniz, and Newton, to name but a few. Furthermore, the Roman Catholic Church recognized Aristotle's notions about time and space as the norm,¹⁵² and his was the primary theory of temporality that existed among the educated until its refutation by the German astronomer Johannes Kepler (1571–1630) at the beginning of the 16th century.¹⁵³ Even in the 20th century, Martin Heidegger has stated that the origin of the everyday sense of time lies within the mind of Aristotle.¹⁵⁴ While Aristotle fell short of viewing time as an abstract number or parameter, the idea that stands at the heart of Newton's absolute time, there can be no doubt that the concept of absolute time is presaged in the thought of Aristotle.¹⁵⁵

Even though Aristotle laid the foundation for the temporal house that Newton built, Newton's thoughts did not arise out of a vacuum. In the nearly two thousand years between the two, several thinkers from the centuries prior to Newton made significant contributions to the idea of absolute time perfected by Newton.¹⁵⁶ Perhaps one of the first was

¹⁴⁹ Morris, *Time's Arrows*, 10.

¹⁵⁰ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 10.1.

¹⁵¹ For example, Gödel, "Relativity Theory and Idealistic Philosophy," 560–2; and cf. Roger Penrose, *Shadows of the Mind: A Search for the Missing Science of Consciousness* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1994), 381–3.

¹⁵² Igor D. Novikov, *The River of Time* (trans. Vitaly Kisin; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1998), 11.

¹⁵³ Piero E. Ariotti, "The Conception of Time in Late Antiquity," *IPQ* 12:4 (1972): 526; and Hawking, *Brief History of Time*, 15.

¹⁵⁴ Heidegger, *Basic*, 257.

¹⁵⁵ Davies, *About Time*, 29; and Coveney and Highfield, *Arrow*, 62, respectively.

¹⁵⁶ For a more detailed discussion, please see Turetzky, *Time*, 66–72.

Nicholas Bonet, who contributed to the study of time by arguing that there were two types of time: natural time and mathematical time. While Bonet's natural time was related to the duration of physical movements arbitrarily measured by the soul, his mathematical time was in many ways abstract, separated from motion and absolute. Likewise, the Roman philosopher Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius (*c.* AD 480–524) was also a proponent of an absolute space and time, but was mathematically and philosophically unable to recognize an abstract axis of time. Bonet and Boethius were among the first to recognize that the “mathematical conception of time considers the successive line of time separately from all matter and movement and so conceives a single line of time, invariable and immobile.”¹⁵⁷

While these thinkers grasped the abstract nature of absolute time, it took the work of mathematician and economist Nicolas Oresme (*c.* 1323–1382) to plot velocity graphically in order for time to be given an axis.¹⁵⁸ In much the same way, Galileo's study of physics led him to represent time along a geometric axis marked at regular intervals.¹⁵⁹ Their geometrical use of time (and space) opened the door for Descartes' great contribution, the Cartesian coordinate system. While Descartes understood the spatial significance of his system, he did not appreciate the temporal.¹⁶⁰ It took Newton's tutor, Isaac Barrow (1630–1677) to assemble these strains of ideas into a makeshift union.¹⁶¹ Yet it was Newton who completed the work. Finally, it is necessary to name two other contributors that aided the development of the theory of absolute time: the mechanical clock and higher mathematics¹⁶²—both of which separated time from motion and perpetuated an abstract and standard demarcation of time.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁷ Turetzky, *Time*, 67.

¹⁵⁸ Nicolas Oresme, *Le livre du ciel et du monde*, 1.2, 2.8, 2.13–4.

¹⁵⁹ Galileo Galilei, *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems: Ptolemaic & Copernican* (2nd ed.; trans. Stillman Drake; Berkeley: University of California, 1967), 20–8.

¹⁶⁰ Turetzky, *Time*, 72.

¹⁶¹ Isaac Barrow, *Lectiones Geometricae* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1976).

¹⁶² Specifically, calculus; or as it was called by Newton, the ‘theory of fluxions’; see I. Bernard Cohen, “A Guide to Newton's *Principia*” in *The Principia: Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* (by Isaac Newton; trans. I. Bernard Cohen and Anne Whitman; Berkeley: University of California, 1999), 106. The discovery of calculus was essential for a mathematical, absolute time: “With calculus the idea of velocity being determined by the ratio of a certain distance traversed to a corresponding time duration was given a rigorous mathematical definition”; see Fagg, *Becoming*, 154.

¹⁶³ Turetzky, *Time*, 67.

In 1687, Isaac Newton published his work, *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, possibly the most important work ever published in the physical sciences.¹⁶⁴ Similar to Aristotle, Newton was far more concerned about physical motion—especially the motions of the stars and planets—than he was in presenting a new or unique understanding of time. This did not stop him, however, from revolutionizing the modern notion of time. Like Bonet, Newton recognized that there are two views of time: a subjective view and a mathematical view. Yet in contrast to Bonet, Newton argued that mathematical time was the true time, and that subjective time was just that: subjective, unreliable, and open to deception.¹⁶⁵

In the *Principia*, Newton offers a definition of absolute time: “Absolute, true, and mathematical time, in and of itself and of its own nature, without reference to any thing external, flows uniformly and by another name is called duration.”¹⁶⁶ In proposing this, Newton maintained that time was completely segregated from space and motion.¹⁶⁷ Time possessed its own singular nature, and instead of viewing time as his predecessors did as a part of the physical world, Newton held that the physical world was embedded in time.¹⁶⁸ In fact, the absolute theory of time is frequently referred to as a receptacle or container of time; events are simply plugged into the receptacle in an absolute, ordered fashion.¹⁶⁹ Time is the unlimited, enumerated axis on which the cosmos proceeds.

Not only is time the universal frame of reference for events, it also “flows equably without regard to anything external.” Similar to an axis, time is unaffected by events placed upon it. Also similar is the idea that time is always identical at any event in the universe, just at any point along a geometric axis.¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, time flows at a steady rate; an

¹⁶⁴ Hawking, *Brief History of Time*, 4–5.

¹⁶⁵ Isaac Newton, *The Principia: Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* (trans. I. Bernard Cohen and Anne Whitman; preceded by “A Guide to Newton’s *Principia*” by I. Bernard Cohen; Berkeley: University of California, 1999), 408–15.

¹⁶⁶ Newton, *Principia*, 408.

¹⁶⁷ Hawking, *Brief History of Time*, 18.

¹⁶⁸ Fagg, *Becoming*, 24.

¹⁶⁹ Newton thought of absolute time and absolute space as the universal frame of reference, or as a “big grid” to which all events or objects could be measured; see Coveney and Highfield, *Arrow*, 62.

¹⁷⁰ Turetzky, *Time*, 74.

apt visualization of this is a river with a constant ripple.¹⁷¹ Newton himself wrote, “All motions can be accelerated and retarded, but the flowing of absolute time cannot be changed.”¹⁷² Strongly influenced by his theology,¹⁷³ Newton believed that this steady flow of time is an “emanent effect of God,”¹⁷⁴ and therefore uncreated. It is clear that Newton’s emphasis on the absolute nature of God impelled his theories of absolute space and time.¹⁷⁵

The acceptance of Newton’s theory created three significant repercussions that are significant to this overview: the loss of absolute space, rigid determinism, and temporal symmetry. First, while Newton maintained that space was absolute, his theory of relative motion actually signaled the death knell of absolute space. It was later seen that Newton’s theory proved that there is not one universal frame of reference for motion.¹⁷⁶ With the bankruptcy of absolute space, it was perhaps only a matter of time before the idea of absolute time would be pulled down as well. Second, Newton’s theory promoted determinism. Because the future (and past) motion of an object could be determined using the observable data of the present motion, it was held that this could be extrapolated to include any movement. Newtonian mechanics dictated that with the proper equations, a person could know the past and future of any movement.¹⁷⁷ The idea of a thoroughly pre-determined universe was as troubling then as it is now to many thinkers and scientists.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷¹ In his appropriately named book, Igor Novikov writes of Newton’s idea: “Time is a uniform ‘river’ without beginning or end, without ‘source’ or ‘sink,’ and all events are carried by the river’s flow”; see Novikov, *River*, 31.

¹⁷² Newton, *Principia*, 410.

¹⁷³ Lawrence W. Fagg, *Two Faces of Time* (Wheaton: Theosophical, 1985), 2.

¹⁷⁴ A. Rupert Hall and Marie Boas Hall, eds., *Unpublished Scientific Papers of Isaac Newton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1962), 132.

¹⁷⁵ Hawking, *Brief History of Time*, 18.

¹⁷⁶ For example, if a locomotive is moving by a railway station at 60 kilometers per hour, and contains a passenger who tosses a newspaper to his friend several rows up at the rate of 5 kilometers an hour, the speed of the newspaper is relative to the position of the observer. The tosser sees the newspaper at 5 kilometers an hour, whereas someone at rest at the railway station sees the newspaper moving at 65 kilometers an hour. If an astronaut were to be at rest at some point in the Earth’s orbit, and was able to observe the train and newspaper as the Earth continued to rotate away from this position, the speed of the newspaper would be much greater; see Coveney and Highfield, *Arrow*, 62–3.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 64.

¹⁷⁸ In light of the previously mentioned paradigms for time, Paul Davies states, “Whereas most ancient cultures viewed the cosmos as a capricious living organism, subject to subtle cycles and rhythms, Newton gave us rigid determinism, a world of

Finally, the most perplexing repercussion of Newton's theory of time and motion was that time was completely symmetrical. In other words, if the motions of any object were run backward—with the time value reversed, or made negative—the system would function normally.¹⁷⁹

Within a short time after Newton proposed his theory, the concept of absolute time held absolute sway in the minds of most modern individuals. Even at the beginning of the 21st century, almost a century after the scientific rejection of a Newtonian view of absolute space and time, the Newtonian theory of time is in many ways the fundamental view of time held by most modern individuals.¹⁸⁰ If this is in fact the case, it may be useful to conclude this section by contrasting absolute time with the very first conception discussed, the conventional view of time. Absolute time differs from conventional time in at least four ways.

First, conventional time represents a broader understanding of time, and does not begin or originate with the physical sciences. This view can be held by individuals who are completely unaware of Newton's mechanics. Second, the conventional view of time is more concerned with the progression and succession of time—in other words, the relationship of one event to another—whereas absolute time is centered on the ordering of time as plotted points within the temporal receptacle. Third, absolute time is traditionally time without limits, whereas natural factors such as memory or existence limit the conventional conception of time. Fourth, and perhaps most significantly, the rate of flow of time within absolute time is normative without the possibility of deviation, whereas it is in a state of constant flux within the conventional conception of time. Even in light of the apparent precision of absolute time, this notion of time has been eclipsed in the 20th century by the theory of time proposed by modern physics.

2.1.5. *Time as a Dimension: The Relativity of Time*

The fifth and final conception for understanding the manner in which time functions is the modern physics view of time in the macroscopic world. While this explanation for the function of time is the youngest of the five conceptions, it in some ways represents a return to one of

inert particles and forces locked in the embrace of infinitely precise lawlike principles"; see Davies, *About Time*, 31.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Coveney and Highfield, *Arrow*, 54–5.

¹⁸⁰ Novikov, *River*, 31.

the oldest concerns—the cosmological significance of time—emphasized by the ancient Babylonians and pre-Aristotelian Greeks, for example. It is akin to the fourth conception, as this idea is primarily concerned with expressing time using the physical laws of the universe. Furthermore, it also reintroduces a subjective element into the understanding of time as discussed in the third conception. Beyond this, however, the modern physics understanding of time bears little resemblance to the other categories even though this theory of time has forever altered the study of time.¹⁸¹

The fifth conception that functionally illustrates the nature of time is in many ways the successor to the Newtonian understanding of time. In the years after Newton, researchers in every field continually improved upon Western science. A few of these—such as Maxwell, Boltzmann, and Einstein—will receive mention below. Physical theories such as those proposed by both Newton and his successors are similar to the mathematical operation of limits:¹⁸² each is an approximation of reality coming ever closer to a perfect theory, yet there is always a closer approximation on the horizon of discovery. Nonetheless, by the time of the early 20th century, Einstein and others had experimentally eliminated Newton's absolute time—although perhaps not from the minds of the average individual.¹⁸³ From a scientific perspective, relativistic time—a theory viewing time as a dimension akin to space—had replaced absolute time. Using an analogy from theatre, prior to relativity the world understood time as part of the stage, but with relativity, it has since joined the cast.¹⁸⁴

In 1905, Albert Einstein (1879–1955), a young clerk working at a patent office in Bern, Switzerland, sounded the first death knell of absolute time with his paper, “Elektrodynamik bewegter Körper,” published in the *Annalen der Physik*.¹⁸⁵ While he published three papers of major consequence to the scientific community that year—and was awarded the 1921 Nobel Prize for the second paper on Brownian motion—it was this third paper that revolutionized the understanding of time. Concerned with the movement of charged particles and yet profoundly

¹⁸¹ Gödel, “Relativity Theory and Idealistic Philosophy,” 557; and Mellor, *Real Time*, 13.

¹⁸² Morris, *Time's Arrows*, 61.

¹⁸³ Hawking, *Brief History of Time*, 22.

¹⁸⁴ Davies, *About Time*, 16.

¹⁸⁵ Albert Einstein, “Elektrodynamik bewegter Körper,” *AP* 17 (1905): 891–921.

respecting Maxwell's work on electromagnetic theory,¹⁸⁶ Einstein argued in a few short pages for two first principles: first; the laws of physics must remain the same regardless of velocity of observer, and second; the speed of light is constant regardless of the motion of the source. These principles became the basis for what was later known as the Special Theory of Relativity.¹⁸⁷

Einstein's revolution is best known by an equation, $E = mc^2$. This simple equation demonstrated that energy and mass are equivalent, and disproved Newton's absolute time in one move. Prior to Einstein, time was the absolute constant, and everything else moved relative to it. Yet, remembering Einstein's two first principles, light now became the absolute constant; its speed could not change. Therefore, if the speed of light is constant, then something must bend—and that something is time. While the flow of time never appears to bend in any individual frame of reference, it does bend relative to the time of another observer, especially if one of the observers is moving at a very high velocity. In this way, time became understood as a dimension, similar to the three spatial dimensions, in that a progression in one may cause a change in the other.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ Einstein accepted wholesale Maxwell's work on electromagnetism rather than try to propose theories—such as the idea of the ether—to make the wave propagation of light fit within classical physics; further, Maxwell's treatise remains one of the most important works in the history of science; see James Clerk Maxwell, *A Treatise on Electricity and Magnetism* (3rd ed.; unabridged; New York: Dover, 1954).

¹⁸⁷ Einstein originally preferred the name 'Theory of Invariance,' since it more clearly articulated the absolute nature of the two physical principles on which he proposed his theory. As we begin our discussion of what people now refer to as 'relativity,' it is important to remember that a) scientific relativity does not mean or imply that 'everything is relative' and b) Galileo's theory of motion was also very much a 'theory of relativity' as well—thereby demonstrating that a 400 year old scientific relativity $\neq$ any type of postmodern epistemology; on scientific relativity, see for example Roger Penrose, *The Road to Reality: A Complete Guide to the Laws of the Universe* (New York: Knopf, 2004), 385–93.

¹⁸⁸ For example, a lady named Nadine is driving her car at 100 kilometers per hour. Assuming for now a constant velocity, she could travel 100 km/hr west, or 100 km/hr northwest, which is really 50 km/hr north and 50 km/hr west. If she chooses a northwestern course over a western one, she is traveling in two spatial dimensions rather than just one, and therefore the velocity is split between the two. Furthermore, if she leaves her northwestern route and heads directly west, she is increasing her velocity along one dimensional axis *but at the expense of the other dimension*. However, if she increases her speed to a very high velocity in one spatial dimension, it increasingly affects her passage—speed—through the time dimension. Since the 'speed limit' is the constant speed of light, approaching that velocity along one dimension only comes at the expense of progression along the time dimension. Thus, to an external observer, time is slowed for this lady traveling at high velocity. In the same way, the mass of the

Einstein was first and foremost a theoretical physicist. He developed the Special Theory not with an appeal to experimental data,¹⁸⁹ but rather through cognitive reasoning.¹⁹⁰ He did not agree with Newton's idea of an absolute time apart from the universe, and believed instead that "time and the physical world were interdependent and interactive."¹⁹¹ Therefore, he started with these first principles and worked forward, rather than acquiring data and working backward toward an answer. In fact, even though Albert Michelson and Edward Morley had performed a now famous experiment in Cleveland in 1887 virtually disproving the idea of an ether, and Sir Joseph Larmor and Hendrik Lorentz had mathematically demonstrated the independence of the light wave, it still took someone to move beyond the reigning temporal conception. In doing so, Einstein opened the door to several revolutions in physics and changed the way we understand time.

As significant as the Special Theory of Relativity was, it nonetheless left many questions unanswered and provoked a great amount of research in the subsequent century. As an example, Einstein's Special Theory did not take into account the effect of gravity. Einstein continued his research, and completed his work on the General Theory of Relativity ten years later thereby reintroducing gravity not as a force such as electromagnetism but as a distortion of spatial geometry. In fact, this particular concept of 'spatial geometry' was first coined by the Russian-German mathematician—and former teacher to the young Einstein at the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule in Zurich—Herman Minkowski in 1907 as the four-dimensional space-time continuum. In the late 1920s, and in light of the previous work by Einstein, physicists Werner Heisenberg, Erwin Schrödinger, Paul Dirac and Niels Bohr were all involved in the initial development of the quantum theory. Included in these scientific revolutions were discoveries in quantum electrodynamics, a subset of the search for a universal quantum field

traveler also increases, thereby assuring the immutability of the speed of light; for a similar yet more detailed explanation, see Greene, *Elegant Universe*, 47–52.

¹⁸⁹ While not immediate, experimental proof for the Special Theory of Relativity has increased dramatically in the last century. At present writing, the theory has been proven to better than an amazing ten millionth of a trillionth percent; see, Hugh Ross, *Beyond the Cosmos: What Recent Discoveries in Astronomy and Physics Reveal about the Nature of God* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1996), 30.

¹⁹⁰ Because of Einstein's approach, it has been subjected to a certain amount of philosophical scrutiny; for example, Edward Ballard posits that Einstein's ideas proceed indirectly from Kant; see Edward G. Ballard, "A Kantian Interpretation of the Special Theory of Relativity," *K-S* 52 (1960): 405.

¹⁹¹ Fagg, *Becoming*, 30.

theory.¹⁹² Finally, at the end of the 20th century with a residual tension between the quantum and the macroscopic worlds, nascent theories such as Roger Penrose's quantum gravity and Edward Witten's superstring theory have come to the fore.¹⁹³

While all of these physical theories of the last century have made major scientific contributions, not all have made similar impacts on the study of time. For the purpose of this study, we will only consider the concept of time embodied by the physics of the macroscopic world in building a paradigm to explore the Fourth Gospel. One of the major consequences of this decision is that we will not relate quantum effects to our temporal paradigm. There are several reasons for this decision. First, a scientific understanding of the quantum theories and macroscopic theories—specifically relativity—reveals that they are not always compatible.¹⁹⁴ Scientists have recognized this for some time, and it is in most cases the current norm for a physicist or chemist is to ignore one in favor of the other in a given situation.¹⁹⁵ Second, while physicists can make the case that relativistic time is not the final answer the scientific community is seeking, there is no doubt that the quantum theory is an incomplete theory.¹⁹⁶ As such, and given the very nature of all things quantum, the effect of the quantum theory on the concept of time has not been as significant as that of relativity. Finally, those sub-quantum theories such as superstring theory, while both interesting and consequential, lack the experimental data and clarity for us to consider fully here. Therefore, we will investigate for this paradigm the way in which time functions according to special and general relativity in the macroscopic world of modern physics.

Perhaps we can first illustrate the idea of time espoused by relativity and modern physics in a simple manner.¹⁹⁷ By definition, noon is the

¹⁹² For example, see Steven Weinberg, *The Quantum Theory of Fields* (3 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1995).

¹⁹³ For example, see Claus Kiefer, *Quantum Gravity* (ISMP; Oxford: Oxford University, 2004); and Michael B. Green, John H. Schwarz, and Edward Witten, *Superstring Theory* (vol. 1; CMMP; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1988), respectively.

¹⁹⁴ One of the difficulties with this statement is that it is a generalization; much depends on which theories are being considered. For example, at present time the General Theory of Relativity does not seem to be compatible with quantum theory in its current form; see Hawking, *Brief History of Time*, 12.

¹⁹⁵ Greene, *Elegant Universe*, 4.

¹⁹⁶ Davies, *About Time*, 10; and Coveney and Highfield, *Arrow*, 146, respectively.

¹⁹⁷ I include this 'example' to help show the dynamic nature of time in a way anyone can understand—it is *not* an example of the temporality of the Special Theory of Relativity.

time of day when the sun is at its apogee in relation to an observer on Earth. However, when it is noon in New York, it is actually early evening in London and dawn the next day in Auckland. Of course, this is due to artificial, Greenwich conventions and the daily rotation of the Earth, but it establishes the idea that each observer carries an individual, situational measure of time.¹⁹⁸ In relativity, two observers can disagree about the time, and *both be right*—it is purely situational.¹⁹⁹ There is no universal time. Furthermore, in this idea we no longer regard time as static, but dynamic, in that it can stretch or contract, and fluctuate relative to an observer.²⁰⁰ If the previous observer in New York caught a futuristically fast Concord to Auckland, the time in Auckland may be early morning but is early evening of the previous day to the traveler. Again, not relativistic time, but the principle is the same—time is dynamic.

Ultimately, these ideas represent a very basic introduction to the modern physics understanding of time. The next step is to develop this understanding into a practical paradigm for the manner in which time functions *in narrative*. Therefore, I propose that the best approach to the exploration of the temporal mechanics in narrative—specifically the narrative of the Fourth Gospel—is to expand and apply this paradigm to a text. We will accomplish this by considering five characteristics of the notion of time as a dimension, and I will further demonstrate that these five characteristics parallel neglected aspects of the study of narrative time. In the remaining chapters, I will apply these five characteristics to the temporal mechanics of the Fourth Gospel in order to draw from the deep reservoir of knowledge from two very different worlds.

2.1.5.1. *Time is Finite: The Edges of Time*

The first characteristic of the way that time functions in this final conception of time is that time is finite. Simply put, time has a beginning and an end. At first blush, this may not seem novel to the reader. When one considers the spatial dimensions, it is not difficult to visualize a cosmos that is finite—perhaps in the way that the Earth is spatially finite. Furthermore, most readers are intuitively more familiar with

¹⁹⁸ Waugh, *Time*, 69–70.

¹⁹⁹ Hawking, *Brief History of Time*, 34.

²⁰⁰ Davies, *New Physics*, 123.

the concept of the ‘Big Bang’ than limitless time.²⁰¹ However, such a view is actually rather unique in history. For the majority of recorded history, the idea that time had neither a beginning nor an end was the norm in scientific, philosophical, and religious schools of thought. For Hittite,²⁰² Zoroastrian,²⁰³ and Hindu belief systems, Greek and Roman mythologies, thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–1274),²⁰⁴ and scientists such as Heraclitus,²⁰⁵ Pythagoras, Newton and even Einstein, time was infinite.

There are two points of significance here. First, even though science did not prove that the universe had a beginning until the 20th century, this finding quickly shattered the status quo of temporal conventions. In essence, it overturned several millennia of conjecture and arguments for a limitless view of time. The second point is that this discovery refocused light on the opinions of those who had previously held that time was finite. Aside from a few uncommon examples,²⁰⁶ the most notable proponent of finite time is the *creatio ex nihilo* view held by most of ancient Judaism and Christianity.²⁰⁷ The idea of *creatio ex nihilo* begins in the creation account in Genesis and continues through ancient works of Jewish philosophy and theology.²⁰⁸ While time is not always specifically mentioned in many of these examples, there is a unique absence of eternal overtones found in other ancient cosmologies. Since the prologue of the Fourth Gospel is unique among the Gospel beginnings in its clear parallels with Genesis and *creatio ex nihilo*, I will investigate several motifs of finite time in a later chapter (Section 3.).

²⁰¹ The idea that time began at the ‘Big Bang’ is now near-universal; see Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, *The Nature of Space and Time* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1996), 20.

²⁰² Gerhard F. Hasel, “Significance of the Cosmology in Genesis 1 in Relation to Ancient Near Eastern Parallels,” *AUSS* 10 (1972): 13.

²⁰³ Robert C. Zaehner, *Zurvan: A Zoroastrian Dilemma* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1955), 410.

²⁰⁴ Aquinas, *Physics*, 8 and Aquinas, *On the Heavens*, 1; and Oliva Blanchette, *The Perfection of the Universe According to Aquinas: A Teleological Cosmology* (University Park: Penn State, 1992), 221; William Lane Craig, “Creation and Conservation Once More,” *RelS* 34:2 (1998): 177.

²⁰⁵ Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies*, 5.105; and cf. Akhundov, *Conceptions*, 64.

²⁰⁶ Such as in one form of Stoic cosmology; see Turetzky, *Time*, 40.

²⁰⁷ For a discussion and defense of the *creatio ex nihilo* idea, see the case study in Section 3.1.

²⁰⁸ For example, see explicit and implicit statements in Gen 1:1f; Isa 44:24; Prov 8:22–4; 2 Macc 7:28; 2 Baruch 21:4; 2 Enoch 25:1ff., 26:1; Joseph and Aseneth 12:1–2; Shepherd of Hermas 1:6, 26:1; Odes of Solomon 16:18–9; 1QS 3:15; 1QM 10:13; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3.10.3; and certain readings of Rev 4:11.

In 1970, with evidence mounting since the first half of the century, physicists Roger Penrose and Stephen Hawking demonstrated that time does have a beginning (at least according to the laws of general relativity).²⁰⁹ This theory was entitled the space-time theorem of general relativity, and the beginning of time and space—the cosmos—was given the common moniker, the ‘Big Bang.’ The technical term used by scientists for a boundary of time or space such as this is *singularity*. More a mathematical term than a physical manifestation, a singularity occurs when a physical quantity becomes mathematically infinite.²¹⁰ At the Big Bang, as well as at an equally colloquialized astrophysical event—a black hole, time as well as space reach an infinite point. In other words, the value of time becomes either 0 or ∞ . One can think of this in an everyday example: If an individual travels to Antarctica, and stands directly on the South Pole, the individual stands on a longitudinal singularity. In other words, it is impossible for the traveler to proceed south from the South Pole: all roads—any movements at all—lead north.²¹¹ In the same manner, there is no time before the Big Bang, and time becomes infinitely dilated at a black hole.²¹² For this paradigm, time is finite with potential origins and ends.

2.1.5.2. *Time is Dimensional: The Shape of Spacetime*

The second characteristic of this paradigm is that time functions as a dimension. As previously mentioned, researchers no longer viewed time after Einstein as the ethereal, ordered backdrop on which the events of the universe unfolded but as a dimension that one could traverse and/or define similar to length or width. Also mentioned was Minkowski’s contribution, the scientist who first codified the idea of the universe as composed of four dimensions rather than three. It should not be surprising that a mathematician first discovered this maxim; after all, to the physical experience of the everyday world, time appears fundamentally different from space. At the same time, it is not—ontologically—space. It is only when one considers the geometry

²⁰⁹ Hawking, *Brief History of Time*, 53.

²¹⁰ Peter Coles, ed., *The Routledge Critical Dictionary of the New Cosmology* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 321–3.

²¹¹ Again, I include this ‘example’ to help show the idea of a singularity—it is *not* an example of a true cosmological singularity; see Novikov, *River*, 220.

²¹² Specifically, this occurs when the surface of a spherical object of one solar mass approaches the Schwarzschild radius.

of the cosmos that the interdependence and similarities of time and space are seen clearly.

Similar to other concepts in relativistic time, we can easily illustrate this with an everyday example. Assuming that two individuals want to meet for an event, it requires that we use *four* coordinates to specify the meeting position. In other words, the coordinates for the meeting could be 37° 47' 25" N x 79° 26' 19" W at 1800 feet above sea level at 23:15 GMT on the 27th of February, or perhaps the more familiar example of meeting at the corner of Church and Liberty, on the first floor at quarter after nine.²¹³ If one omits the fourth coordinate, the time of the event, there would be no guarantee that the meeting would ever occur—just as if one gave no street address or the incorrect floor. The time coordinate is equally important and equally necessary as the other three spatial coordinates. In this manner, time is part and parcel of this dimensional reality. This idea about the dimensionality of time leads directly into a concept that attempts to explain how time fits into the cosmic makeup, and is generally named the *block universe* model.

The idea of a block universe contrasts with one of the major philosophical ideas about time—the ‘eternal now.’²¹⁴ This contrast is primarily an ontological one. Whereas the eternal now theory argues that the present has an ontological primacy over—and in some instances also denies the existence of—the past and future, the block universe model rejects an ontological difference between the past, present and future.²¹⁵ According to this model, the idea of a fleeting moment is only a subjective experience. This is not to say that we do not experience past and future differently; yet past and future exist in the same ontological manner as the present. More succinctly, the past and future exist as surely does the road ahead and the path behind. Just because an individual cannot see or reach the future or the past does not mean it does not exist. Thus, time is dimensional. While frequently rejected

²¹³ Stephen Hawking elaborates, “An event is something that happens at a particular point in space and at a particular time. So one can specify it by four numbers or coordinates. Again, the choice of coordinates is arbitrary; one can use any three well-defined spatial coordinates and any measure of time”; see Hawking, *Brief History of Time*, 24.

²¹⁴ Also known as the ‘fleeting moment’; see above, notably section 2.1.3.

²¹⁵ Huw Price, *Time’s Arrow and Archimedes’ Point: New Directions for the Physics of Time* (New York: Oxford University, 1996), 12.

by philosophers,²¹⁶ the block model is often embraced by researchers in the physical sciences.²¹⁷

Due to the work of Minkowski and Einstein and other supporting scientists, “the physicist views spacetime as laid out like a map.”²¹⁸ Just as we can use a landscape to view an area of space, so too can we represent time in a block model universe as a *timescape* for review and examination.²¹⁹ Again, this is due to the fact that we can view time similar to space, in that the past and future exist just as behind and ahead or above and below exist. While this book supports the idea of a block universe, any equation of time with space we must make with caution. There are striking similarities—Samuel Alexander stated, “Space is in its very nature temporal and time spatial.”²²⁰ In many regards, it is nearly impossible to understand time without spatialization as a circle, line, or dimension.²²¹ It is important to recognize that a spatial view of time can be helpful, but at the same time can be detrimental when it distracts the observer from the unique nature of time.

2.1.5.3. *Time is Deterministic: The Probability of Time*

While the name does not necessarily bear it out, relativistic time is deterministic. At least, it probably is. Unlike the previous two descriptors of relativistic time, determinism may appear to be a philosophical argument that is unrelated to the concept of time. However, determinism is an aspect of temporality, and one could go so far as to argue that

²¹⁶ Alexander Waugh proposes an additional stereotype, writing that “it seems to be the way of the world that while the pragmatist does everything in his power to reject the theory of coexistent time [block universe], the man of religion has always striven to embrace it”; see Waugh, *Time*, 209.

²¹⁷ At this point, it may be helpful to contrast the block universe model of time and the absolute view of time held by Newton. There are two major differences. First, even though we may use the block universe model to understand the way time is structured and observed, this model still structures and observes a time that is relative and warped and dissimilar to Newton’s perfect, mathematical time. Second, while there are some obvious similarities, the block universe model does not have the same structure as the absolute time model—Newton did not see time so much as a dimension printed *on* the map of the cosmos as he saw a thread that constantly and evenly flows in the fabric on which the map was printed. In the block universe model, time does not flow as Newton suggested.

²¹⁸ Davies, *New Physics*, 132.

²¹⁹ Davies, *About Time*, 72.

²²⁰ Samuel Alexander, *Space, Time, and Deity* (vol. 1; London: Macmillan, 1920), 44.

²²¹ Henri Bergson, *Duration and Simultaneity* (trans. Leon Jacobson; Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), 49.

determinism is actually a temporal theory.²²² Very simply, determinism is the idea that every event is fixed by preceding events—the effect is inherent within the cause.²²³ The opposite philosophical viewpoint is free will, which while possessing several significant variations, allows for a certain amount of ‘wobble room’ in the effect. A more anthropocentric explanation states that free will offers any individual agent the power to make personal choices. The applications of these two positions have been at philosophical loggerheads for millennia, and we will not discuss or solve them here. Instead, we will consider the function of determinism in temporality.

Relativistic time is a deterministic time, just as Newton’s absolute time was deterministic. This is simply because under the theory of relativity, if a scientist understands completely the position and the forces acted on an object, it is possible to predict its future path. The two concerns here are ‘possible’ and ‘future.’ First, the issue of determinism *is* an issue of time, because the cause (before) contains the exact information about the effect (after). Thus there are strict causal lines between the before (past) and after (future); and as the block universe model argues, the after (future) exists in the before (past) and the moment (present). The second concern is the possibility of determination. While it is possible to use Einstein’s time to predict the movement of a lunar lander or the planet Mercury, these types of movements are considered relatively simple calculations—at least when compared to predicting the future fate of all the peoples of the universe. Therefore, while a deterministic view of time based on relativity may hold that it is *possible* to predict the after (future), in most all instances it is not *probable*.

Since determinism has coexisted relatively peacefully with scientific views of time since Newton, it has had more time for discussion than the other characteristics of relativistic time explored herein. Writing as a response to Newton’s clockwork universe, the French mathematician Pierre Simon de Laplace (1749–1827) raised one of the most famous statements of concern on determinism:

We ought then to regard the present state of the universe as the effect of its anterior state and as the cause of the one which is to follow. Given for one instant an intelligence which could comprehend all the forces by which nature is animated and the respective situation of the beings

²²² Morris, *Time’s Arrows*, 60.

²²³ Davies, *New Physics*, 137.

who compose it—an intelligence sufficiently vast to submit these data to analysis—it would embrace in the same formula the movements of the greatest bodies of the universe and those of the lightest atom; for it nothing would be uncertain and the future, as the past, would be present to its eyes.²²⁴

Laplace's concern rests on the possibility that one being could ultimately know the position and velocity of every particle in the universe, and therefore ascertain the past and future position of the entire universe. While there is much more to this issue than we can cover here, there is at least one major wrench that has been thrown into a Laplacian-type deterministic machine—Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle. In 1925, the German physicist Werner Heisenberg argued that an experimental limitation of knowledge exists; that is, a person (or computer) cannot simultaneously know the position and momentum of any given particle.²²⁵ While predominantly an axiom of the quantum world, this principle nevertheless disrupts the Laplacian concerns across the spectrum of physics.²²⁶ Therefore, while relativistic time is deterministic and one may be able to predict, or offer a probability of, the future of a given object, if one attempts to measure both the position and momentum of an object, the attempt will fail. Consequently, critics have used Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle in some instances as a sweeping critique of determinism, but we will take a more middle-of-the-road approach by maintaining that relativistic time is indeed determined and predictable, but foretells the future only in probabilities rather than certainties.

2.1.5.4. *Time is Warped: The Distortion of Spacetime*

The fourth characteristic of the function of time in the modern physics paradigm is based on Einstein's General Theory of Relativity. Prior to general relativity, Newtonian science maintained that gravity was a force that drew objects together—an apple falls to the earth just as the earth is pulled to the sun—and is a view still held today by conventional wisdom. This idea originated in part with the experiments of Galileo, but the root of this view started in ancient Greece with the

²²⁴ Pierre Simon de Laplace, *A Philosophical Essay on Probabilities* (trans. Frederick Wilson Truscott and Frederick Lincoln Emory; New York: Dover, 1951), 4.

²²⁵ Ross, *Beyond the Cosmos*, 37.

²²⁶ At least, it probably does—for the dissenting view, see Nicholas Maxwell, "Are Probabilism and Special Relativity Compatible?" *Philosophy of Science* 55:4 (1988): 640–5.

geometry of Euclid (c. 330–260 BC),²²⁷ whose idea of straight lines in plane geometry was the visual foundation for later views of gravity, space and time. Under Euclidean geometry, later scientists such as Galileo and Newton conceived of space and time as absolute, geometrical axes on which objects were placed, and gravity as the force that held everything together. In contrast, general relativity holds that space and time are no longer neutral, but are affected and changed by the presence of matter—the more mass, the more effect.²²⁸ Therefore, modern physics has redefined gravity as the distortion or warpage of spacetime in order to account for massive objects.²²⁹ In this redefinition,²³⁰ the Earth does not travel in a circle around the Sun, but in the shortest line through curved space.²³¹

The discovery of the curvature of spacetime pushed pseudo- and non-Euclidean geometries to the forefront, resulting in several key finds for the study of time. To begin with, these new geometries changed the way that we look at lines. Euclidean mathematics, as well as Newtonian science and conventional wisdom, view the universe as comprised of straight lines, but through the lens of the distorted spacetime of general relativity, these cosmic lines become curved. Therefore, not only is space warped, but so too is time. No longer should we view time as a static background or constant progression of nows, but instead as a malleable and dynamic aspect of reality.²³² In fact, Gödel has mathematically massaged time to assume a variety of configurations and contours, including a circle.²³³

²²⁷ For a discussion of the nature of Euclidean geometries, see Waugh, *Time*, 247; and Lawrence Sklar, *Space, Time, and Spacetime* (Berkeley: University of California, 1974), 13–25.

²²⁸ Coles, *New Cosmology*, 151–2; Davies, *New Physics*, 121; and Rucker, *Geometry*, 106.

²²⁹ For an excellent, more detailed explanation, see Greene, *Elegant Universe*, 67–73.

²³⁰ In this reformulation, gravity remains one of the four fundamental forces yet functions akin to acceleration (Einstein's principle of equivalence) and becomes synonymous with spacetime curvature; see Whitrow, *Natural Philosophy*, 275–6; and Greene, *Elegant Universe*, 64.

²³¹ Hawking and Penrose, *Nature*, 11–2.

²³² Perhaps Davies says it best: “The revolution in our conception of time which has accompanied the theory of relativity is best summarized by saying that, previously, time was regarded as absolute, fixed, and universal—independent of material bodies or observers. Today time is seen to be *dynamical*. It can stretch and shrink, warp and even stop altogether at a singularity. Clock rates are not absolute, but relative to the state of motion or gravitational situation of the observer”; see Davies, *New Physics*, 123.

²³³ F. Lobo and P. Crawford, “Time, Closed Timelike Curves and Causality,” in *The Nature of Time: Geometry, Physics and Perception* (ed. Rosolino Buccheri, Metod Saniga,

The curvature of temporal lines results in a warped world line, also known as a *temporal geodesic*. A geodesic is primarily the shortest line between any two points.²³⁴ If we were to draw a spatial geodesic on a piece of paper containing two points, it would simply be a straight line between those two points. However, in light of the curvature of spacetime, a geodesic is rarely if ever straight. An object such as the Earth travels in a geodesic around the Sun—actually the shortest route (except in the eyes of an external observer, where it appears unnecessarily elliptical).²³⁵ In the same way, temporal geodesics are the shortest lines between two events, and they link together future and past events. The implication of this is that temporal geodesics may also reflect temporal curvatures in narrative and be ‘warped’—a set of events may travel the shortest route along a causal geodesic and yet may appear distorted to an external observer.²³⁶ Finally, the distortion of time points to the nature of time as a continuum, rather than composed of discrete quanta of temporal units.²³⁷ In order for time to twist and contort, and an entity to travel its temporal geodesic through life, time must be infinitely extensive, continuous and divisible and not a random assemblage of ‘eternal now’ moments in time.²³⁸

2.1.5.5. *Time is Restrictive: The Limits of Time*

The final characteristic of time in modern physics that we will consider is the restrictive nature of time. At first glance, this idea seems to parallel conventional wisdom even as it contradicts the Newtonian ideal of simultaneity and the philosophical ideal of an open temporality. In fact,

and William Mark Stuckey; NATOSS 2: MPC 95; Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2003), 292; and Michio Kaku, *Hyperspace: A Scientific Odyssey Through Parallel Universes, Time Warps, and the Tenth Dimension* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1994), 243.

²³⁴ More precisely, a geodesic is an “extremal line” connecting two points—it is either the shortest or the ‘longest’ (though the longest can be difficult to define). In 2D space (such as a piece of paper), the geodesic is always a straight line. In 3D space, the geodesic is likely a curved (not straight) line. In the General Theory of Relativity, an object in free-fall in 4D spacetime is following its geodesic. For further discussion, please see Amos Harpaz, *Relativity Theory: Concepts and Basic Principles* (Boston: Jones and Bartlett, 1992), 109–113.

²³⁵ A simple example of this occurs during a transatlantic flight; the flight path printed on a 2D map appears unnecessarily elongated but is actually the shortest route on 3D curved space.

²³⁶ Coles, *New Cosmology*, 325; and Rucker, *Geometry*, 83, 106.

²³⁷ Hawking and Penrose, *Nature*, 4.

²³⁸ Doss, “Copernicus Revisited,” 203; Rucker, *Geometry*, 117; and cf. A. P. Ushenko, “The Principles of Causality,” *JP* 50:4 (1953): 98.

this characteristic is somewhat unique in that it can not only clearly limit time but also predict temporal possibilities as well. Earlier, I summarized the importance of Minkowski spacetime in the development of general relativity, but this concept also has serious implications for temporal limits. What is more, we remember that the velocity of light is constant; this is the second crucial ingredient of a restricted view of time. The constant speed of light rules out instantaneous movement or effect.²³⁹

If the velocity of light is constant, then it has a limit. This limit on the speed of light means that there are distances that light—or anything else known to science—cannot traverse within too limited a duration. Therefore, there are events that cannot occur because the distance (space) exceeds the duration (time). A more detailed description requires the use of a Minkowski diagram, or *light cone*, as it is commonly named. In essence, a light cone is a two dimensional representation of a four dimensional reality. Imagine on a two dimensional surface, such as a piece of paper, that a cone extends from an origin point forward into the positive end of the y -axis, and another cone extends from the same origin point backward into the negative end of the y -axis—essentially an angular, conical hourglass-type shape is created (or perhaps a rather large X).²⁴⁰

In this situation, the x -axis represents space and the y -axis time. Very simply, all possible future events are contained in the forward cone, and all possible past events are represented in the backward cone.²⁴¹ Impossible events, those outside the bounds of time, fall outside the cones. If one were to travel at the speed of light, it would be possible to reach the lines that make up the cones (null-geodesics).²⁴² Now, remembering that temporal geodesics represent the life-like progression of events, these world lines are found within the selected light cones. However, each of these temporal geodesics is warped within the light cones in response to velocity and/or matter/gravity, no matter how

²³⁹ Sklar, *Spacetime*, 253; and Ushenko, “Principles of Causality,” 95.

²⁴⁰ For a more detailed description, please see Coles, *New Cosmology*, 250–1.

²⁴¹ Rucker, *Geometry*, 83; for a discussion of time-, space-, and light-like separations, see pp. 85–6.

²⁴² For further discussion, please see Hawking and Penrose, *Nature*, 5–12; Whitrow, *Natural Philosophy*, 272–4; and Sklar, *Spacetime*, 58–61.

minute.²⁴³ Ultimately, the use of light cones predicts an interesting repercussion for our development of a temporal paradigm.

A light cone can determine the possible and the impossible in the past and future of any given entity. However, there are two caveats. First, a light cone only informs the possibility of an event for one observer. Additional observers have temporal geodesics based on different light cones that may or may not result in conflation. Second, general relativity and light cones allow for a variety of cosmological models; for example, Gödel was instrumental in developing models that appear counterintuitive to reason.²⁴⁴ Several of these models, in concurrence with the discoveries of quantum theory, lead to the possibility of multiple universes or modalities.²⁴⁵ In the end, time is the defining factor of modern physics.

In the first chapter, we discovered that it is in many cases wisest to approach a complex, enigmatic concept—such as time or narrative—tangentially, from a functional point of view, rather than head-on such as with ontology. We learned that narrative is too important a concept to remain merely and simplistically unaffected. In keeping with this, we have now considered five primary ways that people understand and utilize time. In light of these paradigms, the modern physics understanding of time will offer an original and unique exposition of the temporality of narrative. At this point, we will begin to develop a paradigm for the temporal mechanics of narrative based on the modern physics concept of time. We will then in turn apply these novel temporal mechanics to the Fourth Gospel for the remainder of this study.

2.2. NARRATIVE TIME

In light of our previous discussion, the concept of narrative time is a rather ironic one—ironic in that while there are countless general notions about time, there are very few conceptions of narrative time

²⁴³ Alasdair M. Richmond, “Gödelian Time-Travel and Anthropic Cosmology,” *Ratio* 17:2 (2004): 178; and Kaku, *Hyperspace*, 237–40.

²⁴⁴ Kurt Gödel, “An Example of a New Type of Cosmological Solution of Einstein’s Field Equations of Gravitation,” *RMP* 21:3 (1949): 447; see also Richmond, “Gödelian,” 176.

²⁴⁵ Gödel, “Relativity Theory and Idealistic Philosophy,” 559–62; Mark van Atten, “Gödel, Mathematics, and Possible Worlds,” *Axiomathes* 12 (2001): 356; and contra Jaakko Hintikka, *The Intentions of Intentionality and Other New Models for Modalities* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1975), 49.

in circulation. Indeed, this chapter will demonstrate *the stark contrast between the variety of possible temporalities and the limited approaches available for the study of narrative*. This argument is significant—when critics broach the subject of time in literary, historiographical, and poetic narrative studies, it is never delineated or defined.²⁴⁶ Readers and critics allow time to be considered and critiqued without qualification. There are two results: first, most studies of time end up being easily stereotyped, and second, these studies impoverish the understanding of the narrative that the reviewer had hoped to enrich—readers will never understand the subtle temporal shades and hues of a text without an accurate lens of temporality. What is more, confusion over the temporality of a text will result in confusion in structure, meaning, and purpose. As time is the code to deciphering the universe,²⁴⁷ so too is time often the code to deciphering narrative—especially non-psychological and non-chronological narratives such as the Fourth Gospel.

As I demonstrated earlier (Section 1.2.), temporality stands at the heart of narrative. Time, by virtue of progression and sequence, is granted headship over the remaining aspects of narrative.²⁴⁸ While some thinkers are quick to bemoan the ‘tyranny of time,’ the truth is far from this—temporal narrative is foundational to transforming mere existence into coherent, relatable experiences—a fact the ancient world understood far more than modernity.²⁴⁹ Indeed, the only ‘tyranny’ is the austere limits arbitrarily placed on narrative by critical culture. Narrative temporality is potentially simple but at once complex and individualized;²⁵⁰ after all, “one of the prerogatives of any narrative is to play with time.”²⁵¹ In the end, a lack of clear delineation of the concept of

²⁴⁶ Ermarth, *Sequel*, 25. There are, of course, very rare exceptions such as Paul Harris’ application of fractal geometry to the temporality of Faulkner; see Paul A. Harris, “Fractal Faulkner: Scaling Time in ‘Go Down, Moses,’” *PT* 14:4 (1993); and to a lesser degree John Dominic Crossan’s study of the parables based loosely on Heidegger’s view of time; see John Dominic Crossan, *In Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 31–2.

²⁴⁷ John A. Teske, “Cognitive Neuroscience, Temporal Ordering, and the Human Spirit,” *Zygon* 36:4 (2001): 667.

²⁴⁸ Wesley A. Kort, *Modern Fiction and Human Time: A Study in Narrative and Belief* (Tampa: USF, 1985), 3; and cf. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 1:3.

²⁴⁹ David Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1986), 65; and Kort, *Modern Fiction and Human Time*, 89.

²⁵⁰ Monika Fludernik, “Chronology, Time, Tense and Experientiality in Narrative,” *LL* 12:2 (2003): 119.

²⁵¹ Sandra Naddaff, *Arabesque: Narrative Structure and the Aesthetics of Repetition in 1001 Nights* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University, 1991), 95.

time in narrative and the preference for one of two simplistic temporal templates results in an impoverished study of narrative.²⁵²

We must challenge the implicit assumptions about time applied to the study of narrative in order to move beyond simplistic understandings.²⁵³ *The greatest problem facing the study of the temporality of narrative is the inability to move beyond the stereotype of the 'subjective' and 'objective' poles of narrative time.*²⁵⁴ On the one hand, many studies of narrative are 'psychological' and hold a quasi-Kantian, meandering 'eternal now' attitude; these 'subjective' approaches rely on inner ideals about time that can never (and perhaps should not) relate to the real world.²⁵⁵ On the other hand, the rest of these studies are 'chronological' and take a rigorous, quasi-Newtonian linear slant;²⁵⁶ these 'objective' studies are mostly non-semantic, generally very limited in scope, and often derided by critics.²⁵⁷ Recent studies of narrative often place themselves in this category since they utilize a Structuralist-conceived 'narrative time' with little theoretical qualification or distinction beyond a strict formalist sense of chronology.²⁵⁸ While some narratives are completely psychological or mechanically chronological, most are not; these polar ideals will not generally illuminate the temporality of narrative when applied to a text.²⁵⁹

²⁵² Miel, "Temporal Form," 917; cf. Doss, "Copernicus Revisited," 202; and Section 2.1.1.

²⁵³ Of course, the personal biases of critics are an *a priori* assumption that can be recognized and discussed, though they often are not, and these biases do pervade and negatively affect temporal studies; see Chester G. Starr, "Historical and Philosophical Time," *HTB* 6 (1966): 35; and Hal Childs, *The Myth of the Historical Jesus and the Evolution of Consciousness* (SBLDS 179; Atlanta: SBL, 2000), 73.

²⁵⁴ Tony E. Jackson, "The Desires of History, Old and New," *Clio* 28:2 (1999): 169–70; as an example, see Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art: An Investigation on the Borderlines of Ontology, Logic, and Theory of Literature* (Evanston: Northwestern University, 1973), 234.

²⁵⁵ Viktor Shklovsky, "Sterne's Tristram Shandy: Stylistic Commentary," in *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays* (ed. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis; Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1965), 36.

²⁵⁶ Cf. Jackson, "Desires of History," 169–70.

²⁵⁷ David Leon Higdon, *Time and English Fiction* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1977), 57.

²⁵⁸ Although, in defense of narratologists, they at least have tried to delineate time in narrative—no small task; see Andrew Gibson, *Towards a Postmodern Theory of Narrative* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University, 1996), 181; José C. Bermejo-Barrera, "Explicating the Past: In Praise of History," *HT* 32:1 (1993): 22; and Ronen, "Paradigm Shift," 829.

²⁵⁹ Cf. Brian Richardson, "'Time is Out of Joint': Narrative Models and the Temporality of the Drama," *PT* 8:2 (1987): 308.

As a result, we may consider any simple, chronological study of the Gospels that is common in modern Biblical research. These chronological studies beg the question: *what is 'chronology' but a modern invention of a modern temporal ideal applied to an ancient text?* In light of this, it is clear that scholars and critics *have* employed paradigms for narrative time—albeit ones that are commonly assumed and poorly defined.²⁶⁰ In the previous sections, we have discussed five different mundane conceptions of time, each of which a critic could use to build a paradigm for the study of narrative temporality. At this point, I will build a case against using any of the first four conceptions in exploring the temporal mechanics of the Fourth Gospel.

First of all, the linear conception of time is common to experience but often problematic to qualify in detail. The primary difficulty in using this conception stems from the fact that it conceals the complex nature of time and misleads the critical reader.²⁶¹ The simple linear conception also remains hopelessly pre-Copernican with its emphasis on sensory perception.²⁶² Second, one could successfully apply the circular conception of time to narrative but it would remain very limited in scope. While an emphasis on the sacred and organic aspect of time can explore some elements of subjective time, circular time fails to come

²⁶⁰ At this point, we may recall the crucial words of Gerhard von Rad: “Earlier exposition was quite unaware that there was a problem here, and uncritically assumed that its own Western and Christian concept of time also held good for Israel. To-day, however, we are beginning to realise that her experience of which we call time and ours are different. Yet this in itself does not bring us very much further forward, for we find it extremely difficult to move beyond the terms of our own concept, which we naïvely believe to be the only possible one, and to understand the specific details of another in such a way as to be able to make much in reconstructing it. The attitude of Western man to linear time is, generally speaking, naïve; time is seen as an infinitely long straight line on which the individual can mark such past and future events as he can ascertain. This time-span has a mid-point, which is our present day. From it the past stretches back and the future forwards. But to-day one of the few things of which we can be quite sure is that this concept of absolute time, independent of events, and, like the blanks on a questionnaire, only needing to be filled up with data which will give it content, was unknown to Israel”; see Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (vol. 2; trans. D. M. G. Stalker; New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 99–102; and see also Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth, *Realism and Consensus in the English Novel: Time, Space and Narrative* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University, 1998), 42.

²⁶¹ For example, see David Carroll, “Diachrony and Synchrony in *Histoire*,” *MLN* 92:4 (1977): 823; Goldfajn, *Word Order and Time*, 37; Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson; San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1962), 474; and Ricoeur, “Narrative Time,” 166–7.

²⁶² Ralph B. Winn, “Our Pre-Copernican Notion of Time,” *JP* 40:15 (1943): 404; and Childs, *Myth*, 75.

to terms with—if not rejects outright—the linear and objective time at work in the world.²⁶³

Third, the primary concern with the philosophical conception of time is similar to the concern over the circular conception; the philosophical conception has a wider range yet still avoids the ‘objective’ time of the world. In doing so, it is at best vague and indistinct.²⁶⁴ What is worse is the privileging of the present—the ‘eternal now’ point of view—a staple of the philosophical conception of time when applied to narrative.²⁶⁵ The fourth conception of time is the first conception that begins to address the relationship between narrative and the actual, empirical world. Whereas the axial conception of time is quantifiable and precise, critics usually ignore or deride it in the study of narrative. Even as absolute time addresses many functions of time ignored by subjective conceptions, its predetermined rigidity severely limits it as a method.²⁶⁶ The lack of flexibility and diversity result in a conception of time that seems distant from any human quality.²⁶⁷

As a result, we now have several specific criteria for an appropriate conception of time with which to apply to narrative. In the first place, the conception needs to move beyond traditional and limited understandings of time to the ability to grasp increasingly complex and diverse temporalities. While the traditional forms are more comfortable,²⁶⁸ they do not succeed in divulging the deep-rooted substance of narrative temporality.²⁶⁹ Furthermore, from historiography to literature, time is unbelievably diverse in function, requiring an equally diverse and flexible conception.²⁷⁰ The result is that literary and philosophical

²⁶³ Higdon, *Time and English Fiction*, 2–3; and Theodore Ziolkowski, *Dimensions of the Modern Novel: German Texts and European Contexts* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1969), 202.

²⁶⁴ Meyerhoff, *Time in Literature*, 5, 10, 15; and Olson, “Genesis and Narratology,” 4.

²⁶⁵ Robin Fox, “Time Out of Mind: Anthropological Reflections on Temporality,” *KronoScope* 1:1/2 (2001): 137; and Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 474.

²⁶⁶ Starr, “Historical and Philosophical Time,” 32; Gibson, *Postmodern*, 13, 182; and Donald J. Wilcox, *The Measure of Times Past: Pre-Newtonian Chronologies and the Rhetoric of Relative Time* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1987), 49.

²⁶⁷ Meyerhoff, *Time in Literature*, 9.

²⁶⁸ Arnold B. Levison, “Events and Time’s Flow,” *Mind* 96:383 (1987): 343.

²⁶⁹ Scott Mandelbrote, “History, Narrative, and Time,” *HEI* 22:5/6 (1996): 340.

²⁷⁰ Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory* (trans. Steven Rendell and Elizabeth Claman; New York: Columbia University, 1992), 10.

approaches to time must consider the truths of the physical world.²⁷¹ What is more, discussions that include the physical or objective aspects of time must try to include valid discoveries from the physical sciences even if those discoveries appear confusing or revolutionary.²⁷² For these reasons, we will use the modern physics conception of time to build a paradigm of narrative temporality to explore the temporal mechanics of the Fourth Gospel.

2.2.1. *Narrative Time: A Paradigm of Relativistic Temporal Hermeneutics*

In order to understand best the manner in which time functions within a narrative, we must develop a new paradigm, and we must develop it for two significant reasons. First, a paradigm is in essence a cluster of foundational assumptions.²⁷³ In the above section, I demonstrated that studies of narrative time are founded on implicit assumptions about time; this new paradigm will replace those assumptions with different theoretical assumptions about the workings of time. Whether in the field of science or religion, paradigms are useful constructs to comprehend complex and abstract ideas.²⁷⁴ Second, paradigms are necessary to transform a conception into a useable function; a paradigm of time is the ‘mask’ that makes the conception visible or the ‘map’ that we may follow to comprehension.²⁷⁵ In the end, time is especially suited for a paradigmatic functionality.²⁷⁶

We will be unable to propose a paradigm for a relativistic temporal hermeneutic without some continuity between disciplines.²⁷⁷ For this

²⁷¹ Heise, *Chronoschisms*, 42; and Gregory Currie, “Can There Be a Literary Philosophy of Time?” in *The Arguments of Time* (ed. Jeremy Butterfield; Oxford: Oxford University, 1999), 61.

²⁷² Wilcox, *Measure of Times Past*, 48; and William Lane Craig, “God and Real Time,” *RelS* 26 (1990): 335.

²⁷³ Thomas Kuhn popularized the concept of the paradigm in the philosophy of science field; while there are many detractors to Kuhn’s ideas, they are substantial and persuasive; see Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (3rd ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996).

²⁷⁴ Ian G. Barbour, *Religion and Science: Historical and Contemporary Issues* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997), 125; and cf. Heller, “Cosmological Singularity,” 670.

²⁷⁵ See Peter Munz, *The Shapes of Time: A New Look at the Philosophy of History* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University, 1977), 38; and Fagg, *Becoming*, 76, respectively.

²⁷⁶ Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (New York: Oxford University, 2000), 129.

²⁷⁷ The continuity between two paradigms allows the debate and shift in thinking; see Harold Brown, *Perception, Theory and Commitment: The New Philosophy of Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1977), 167.

reason, I will retain many of the general principles used by narratology and narrative criticism. As an example, scholars have framed the temporality of narrative around the distinction between the *fabula* and the *sjuzhet*, the emplotment of time, a useful concept that I will preserve.²⁷⁸ Likewise, due to its printed or spoken nature, and more importantly its being *in* time, I recognize that time in narrative basically maintains linear features.²⁷⁹ In other words, even a circular narrative still has patches of linearity.²⁸⁰ Similarly, while it is impossible for a narrative to be synchronic, most are diachronic and we may even describe some as truly polychronic.²⁸¹ Another general principle I will preserve is that narrative comprises its own world; a fact that is abundantly clear to any reader of fiction, but applies to all narratives including factual narratives.²⁸² At the same time, that world is always fashioned from a position or ideal and is not an exact representation; for example, ‘times’ and ‘dates’ are non-existent ideals that are common additions to most all narratives.²⁸³ Finally, I will not invent/reinvent words or jargon used in the study of time as long as they remain relevant to our research goals. We will now turn to a relativistic paradigm for narrative temporality.

2.2.1.1. *Narrative Time is Finite*

The first characteristic of a paradigm for the manner in which time functions in narrative, based on the modern physics conception of time, is that narrative time is finite. As we discovered in Section 2.1.5.1., time is a finite dimension within the bounds of creation—an unusual idea when applied to the universe as well as narrative. Prior to the modern physics conception of time, most people reckoned time to be infinite and they placed an emphasis on the flowing, eternal aspects of time.²⁸⁴

²⁷⁸ For example, Ricoeur has contributed greatly to this foundation; see Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 1:225.

²⁷⁹ Carroll, “Diachrony,” 803.

²⁸⁰ On the general arguments, see Section 2.1.2.

²⁸¹ The diachronicity/polychronicity of narrative must be addressed, especially when using a purely synchronic method such as narratology—though we will be far more expansive and diachronic by the end; see Gibson, *Postmodern*, 181; and cf. Brian Stock, *Listening for the Text: On the Uses of the Past* (Baltimore: JHU, 1990), 90.

²⁸² Cf. Boris Uspensky, *A Poetics of Composition: The Structure of the Artistic Text and Typology of a Compositional Form* (trans. Calentina Zavarin and Susan Wittig; Berkeley: University of California, 1973), 137.

²⁸³ David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1985), 216.

²⁸⁴ Quentin Smith, “On the Beginning of Time,” *Noûs* 19 (1985): 579–584; for an example, see Massimo Fusillo, “How Novels End: Some Patterns of Closure in

Most sophisticated thinkers denigrated the idea that time had a beginning.²⁸⁵ What is more, while time in narrative is clearly finite in that all narratives have some type of beginning and end, most studies of narrative time still attempt to divine eternal principles and temporalities from the text. As a result, those models of narrative temporality endeavoring to locate conclusively the eternal in the finite are doomed to failure.

The finite function of time also contrasts with the experience of time—a person experiences time without a beginning or end—even though birth and death clearly mark experiential time as finite.²⁸⁶ This example parallels the modern physics conception in that time is finite because it is *bounded* by endpoints, or as we labeled them above, singularities. However, one of the specific qualities of a singularity in modern physics is that it is never ‘naked’; a singularity is always ‘hidden.’²⁸⁷ In other words, a singularity cannot be observed or comprehended from within the system that it bounds—just as birth and death can never be fully understood from the vantage point of the life bounded by that birth and that death. This is true for narrative as well as the universe.²⁸⁸ In many ways, the times after the beginning and before the end form the *event manifold* of the singularity in the universe and the narrative text. However, because of the overshadowing, boundary effect of beginnings and endings, there is a danger of assessing all times in between in light of the boundary.²⁸⁹ For these reasons, the ‘birth’ and ‘death’ of narrative perform a significant and specific function for narrative temporality.

The result of a finite narrative bounded in time by a beginning and ending is a narrative that is a closed system. Another way of stating

Ancient Narrative,” in *Classical Closure: Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature* (ed. Deborah H. Roberts, Francis M. Dunn, and Don Fowler; Princeton: Princeton University, 1997), 209.

²⁸⁵ Heller, “Cosmological Singularity,” 667.

²⁸⁶ Childs, *Myth*, 75; and Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 47.

²⁸⁷ In the same manner, narrative abhors a naked singularity (whether beginning or ending); for the modern physics viewpoint, see Hawking and Penrose, *Nature*, 21; and Heller, “Cosmological Singularity,” 671.

²⁸⁸ J. Hillis Miller, “The Problematic of Ending in Narrative,” *NCF* 33:1 (1978): 4; and cf. Edmund Husserl, *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy: Philosophy as Rigorous Science and Philosophy and the Crisis of European Man* (trans. Quentin Lauer; New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 146.

²⁸⁹ Cf. Hawking and Penrose, *Nature*, 15; and Yves Bestgen and Wietske Vonk, “Temporal Adverbials as Segmentation Markers in Discourse Comprehension,” *JML* 42:1 (2000): 76.

this is that a narrative is a complete and distinct world.²⁹⁰ As such, the temporal progression of the narrative will be along an incomplete (closed) geodesic from the beginning to the conclusion.²⁹¹ We can visualize this narrative feature in much the same way on another world: the Earth contains a closed geodesic that runs from the North Pole to the South Pole. Therefore, we can meaningfully trace the sequence of temporality throughout the pages of a narrative text from beginning to end, without regard for the configuration of the sequence. We will investigate the finite aspect of narrative temporality in the Fourth Gospel in more detail starting in Section 3.

2.2.1.2. *Narrative Time is Dimensional*

Dimensionality is the second characteristic of a relativistic paradigm for the temporality of narrative. In Section 2.1.5.2., we learned that time is a dimensional timescape wherein the past, present and future are equally accessible. Similarly, narrative time is dimensional in that we may view a narrative as an individual block universe whereby all local temporalities are understood as aspects of the temporal dimension.²⁹² A narrator creates a text by setting and ‘freezing’ the experienced events into a temporal (and spatial) configuration.²⁹³ A common illustration of this idea is the three dimensional box drawn on a two dimensional piece of paper: the box is drawn so as to give the viewer an idea of an object that is too complex to be drawn—just as the temporality of narrative is too complex to be represented as a line, for example.²⁹⁴ As a result, when one narrates a story, it is impossible to exactly match the time of the story with the time of the event; the time of the story can be objective and sequential while remaining malleable, relative, and subjective to an observer. Furthermore, particular indicators such as past and present only become meaningful in relation to the dimensional configuration.²⁹⁵ In retrospect, this characteristic of narrative time contrasts

²⁹⁰ Fusillo, “How Novels End,” 209.

²⁹¹ Cf. Hawking and Penrose, *Nature*, 19.

²⁹² Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth, “Beyond History,” *RH* 5:2 (2001): 211–2; and Helen Aristar Dry, “The Movement of Narrative Time,” *JLS* 12:2 (1983): 19.

²⁹³ The idea of ‘freezing’ a narrative is not limited to simple lines but even includes complex ‘cosmologies’; see Frye, *Great Code*, 62–3, 71; our consideration of worlds in Chapter 7; and cf. Möller and Luraghi, “Time in the Writing of History,” 11.

²⁹⁴ Louis O. Mink, “History and Fiction as Modes of Comprehension,” *NLH* 1:3 (1970): 547–8.

²⁹⁵ Davies, *New Physics*, 129.

sharply with the typical absolute or eternal now method—approaches that seem one dimensional in comparison.

The dimensional characteristic of narrative time exposes the shortcomings of an arbitrary, eternal now approach to temporality by grounding objectivity in relativity. Furthermore, narrative temporality may now be objective while remaining free from an absolute and axial temporality. This opens the door to an objective study of non-absolute narratives—narratives which attempt to narrate a three dimensional box on a two dimensional piece of paper.²⁹⁶ Non-absolute narratives exist in postmodern literature, historiography, the ancient world and many other genres, and are usually recognizable by their temporal movements, digressions, and flourishes. In addition, non-absolute narratives may have linear progressions without being tied to a temporal axis.²⁹⁷ At the same time, the organization of these progressions and the configurations they occupy may be difficult to identify, if not outright unknowable.²⁹⁸ We will take up the dimensional characteristic of narrative temporality and its implications on temporal movements and configurations in greater detail in Chapter 4.

2.2.1.3. *Narrative Time is Deterministic*

The third characteristic of the modern physics paradigm for narrative temporality is determinism. In this paradigm, we will base the deterministic characteristic of time on the probabilistic determinism of modern physics, rather than either the Newtonian/Laplacian mechanistic or the Kantian/Humian philosophical versions of determinism. In fact, as I demonstrated in Section 2.1.5.3., determinism is based largely on the probability of causality—a temporal notion that the after (effect) is locatable in the before (cause). In narrative, the text is pre-configured for the reader; however, any given text may be configured in a near limitless fashion.²⁹⁹ The configuration of a narrative results in a ‘synthetic unity’ and so we may view the text as greater than the sum of its parts.³⁰⁰ The variability of configuration does not destroy temporality or

²⁹⁶ Cf. Davies, *About Time*, 29.

²⁹⁷ Ronen, “Paradigm Shift,” 829.

²⁹⁸ Contra, for example, Barbour who argues for the ease of an absolute configuration; see Barbour, *Religion and Science*, 19.

²⁹⁹ Meir Sternberg, “Ordering the Unordered: Time, Space, and Descriptive Coherence,” *JFS* 61 (1981): 60.

³⁰⁰ W. H. Dray, “On the Nature and Role of Narrative in Historiography,” *HT* 10:2 (1971): 169–70; and Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History*, 115.

causality but does make complete predictability impossible.³⁰¹ Nonetheless, many narratives remain highly probabilistically deterministic due to locatable causal connections within the text.³⁰²

In a very simple way, narratives are determined in that they are already written. This fact brings into question the ‘free play’ ideal found within certain segments of postmodern thought.³⁰³ Under the absolute hegemony of the Newtonian physic coupled with the Cartesian metaphysic, many thinkers and critics scorned determinism,³⁰⁴ causing the postmodern push toward indeterminism.³⁰⁵ While many narratives are indeterministic, true ‘free play’ does not exist because a narrative always returns to its initial state upon rereading.³⁰⁶ At the same time, ‘free play’ can exist within the reader, but this is beyond the bounds of the text. Therefore, the lack of a perfect probability of predictability in the reader—including an extreme ‘free play’ form—prevents the reader from becoming Laplace’s demon in a narrative text while preserving the possibility of a relatively deterministic text.

The possibility of a relatively deterministic text makes it possible to consider the role of causality and coherence in the configuration of a narrative. As a start, the minimum requirement for a text is comprehensibility; yet, a text may be comprehensible without being coherent.³⁰⁷ However, a narrative *must* be more than just comprehensible—a narrative *must* have some degree of coherence revealed in its temporality and/or causality (Section 1.2.).³⁰⁸ In the modern physics paradigm, time is the arbiter of coherence,³⁰⁹ and therefore the deterministic quality of narrative temporality is a predictor of the probability of causality and

³⁰¹ Taede A. Smedes, “Is Our Universe Deterministic? Some Philosophical and Theological Reflections on an Elusive Topic,” *Σygon* 38:4 (2003): 957.

³⁰² Cf. Morris, *Time’s Arrows*, 60.

³⁰³ For example, Umberto Eco, *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1994), 6.

³⁰⁴ For example, see Vladimir Nabakov, *Ada, or Ardor: A Family Chronicle* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969); and cf. N. Katherine Hayles, *The Cosmic Web: Scientific Field Models and Literary Strategies in the Twentieth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1984), 121–2.

³⁰⁵ Gregory R. Peterson, “God, Determinism, and Action: Perspectives from Physics,” *Σygon* 35:4 (2000): 884.

³⁰⁶ Robert C. Bishop, “On Separating Predictability and Determinism,” *Erkenntnis* 58 (2003): 171–2.

³⁰⁷ Tanya Reinhart, “Conditions for Text Coherence,” *PT* 1:4 (1980): 162.

³⁰⁸ Thiselton, *New Horizons*, 482; and Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 92.

³⁰⁹ Sanford Kwinter, *Architectures of Time: Toward a Theory of the Event in Modernist Culture* (Cambridge: MIT, 2001), 68; and Harold Toliver, *Animate Illusions: Explorations of Narrative Structure* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1974), 11.

coherence in a text.³¹⁰ The coherence of the Fourth Gospel will be at stake as we further consider narrative determinism in Chapter 5.

2.2.1.4. *Narrative Time is Warped*

The fifth characteristic of the modern physics paradigm for narrative time is the warpage of time. In Section 2.1.5.4., we surveyed the effect of objects on the shape of spacetime—an effect that curves and distorts spacetime in such a manner that objects will travel in shortest-possible lines that appear curved due to the distortion of spacetime. For this reason, time is a continuum and is not composed of quanta or atoms of time.³¹¹ In narrative, time likewise functions as a continuum. While theorists have argued that narratives are composed of motifs,³¹² functions,³¹³ or moments,³¹⁴ the best course of action is to speak of intervals of time, or *events*, as the building blocks of narratives.³¹⁵ Events can amplify and sub-divide, even stretch and shrink,³¹⁶ and lend the sense of shape and progression to the plot.³¹⁷

If events are intervals of time that comprise all narratives, then narratives must also be ‘comprised’ of gaps between these intervals of time.³¹⁸ In order for narration to occur, a narrator must pull events (and gaps) out of their temporal and spatial contexts and configure them with other events (and gaps) into a sequence that is to some degree deterministic.³¹⁹ At the same time, the conventional metaphor

³¹⁰ Kenneth S. Friedman, “Analysis of Causality in Terms of Determinism,” *Mind* 89:356 (1980): 545.

³¹¹ Davies, *About Time*, 187; and C. L. Hamblin, “Instants and Intervals,” in *The Study of Time* (ed. J. T. Fraser, F. C. Haber and G. H. Müller; Berlin: Springer, 1972), 325.

³¹² Lubomír Doležel, “Truth and Authenticity in Narrative,” *PT* 1:3 (1980): 11; and Tomashevsky, “Thematics,” 61–98.

³¹³ For example, see Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, 21.

³¹⁴ While most common in studies based on conventional wisdom, Paolo Vivante’s study uses the moment yet allows for the possibility of an interval aspect; see Paolo Vivante, *Homeric Rhythm: A Philosophical Study* (Study of World Literature 82; Westport: Greenwood, 1997), 74–5.

³¹⁵ Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1973), 5; Kwinter, *Architectures of Time*, 69; Aristotle, *Poetics*, 9–11; Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 15; Hamblin, “Instants and Intervals,” 326; Smith, “Domain of Tense,” 603–4; and cf. Ricoeur, “Narrative Time,” 167.

³¹⁶ Paul A. Roth, “Narrative Explanations: The Case of History,” *HT* 27:1 (1988): 8.

³¹⁷ Ryan, “Modal Structures,” 737.

³¹⁸ Kermode, *Poetry, Narrative, History*, 34; Hamblin, “Instants and Intervals,” 327; and cf. Danto, *Narration and Knowledge*, 2.

³¹⁹ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 9–11; Ronen, *Possible Worlds*, 149; and Michael Trussler, “Suspended Narratives: The Short Story and Temporality,” *SSF* 33:4 (1996): 558.

for movement and sequencing of time is that of an evenly flowing river.³²⁰ Yet narrative time is anything but even or smooth.³²¹ Unlike the conventional view, narrative time is a surging torrent of flotsam and jetsam. The heterogeneous property of narrative temporality—including specialized deposits such as repetition and circularity—is that which grants the sense of tempo and rhythm within the text.³²²

For these reasons, the time lines of narrative do not follow straight and smooth Euclidean geometry.³²³ In fact, time in narrative is warped because of the effect of events on the narrative shape.³²⁴ When ‘massive’ events occur around several ‘less massive’ events in a narrative, the massive events cause a distortion in the fabric of the narrative around them, pulling other events toward them. Less massive events are caught in the pull of the density and gravitas of these events,³²⁵ creating non-absolute and often non-linear incomplete geodesics of narrative time. Since narrative study maintains that narrative meaning is found in the end of a narrative, the idea of relative, localized pools of meaning has serious repercussions for narrative time. We will delve into the mechanics of the distortion of time in the narrative of the Fourth Gospel starting in Chapter 6.

2.2.1.5. *Narrative Time is Restrictive*

The final characteristic of the modern physics paradigm for the temporal mechanics of narrative is that time is restricted. Prior to the modern physics paradigm, time was limited only to the imagination or the atomistic concept of the moment. However, as I argued in

³²⁰ Jacqueline de Romilly, *Time in Greek Tragedy* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1968), 39.

³²¹ Starr, “Historical and Philosophical Time,” 34; and Gibson, *Postmodern*, 17.

³²² Elizabeth Bowen, “Notes on Writing a Novel,” in *Novels in the Making* (ed. William E. Buckler; Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1961), 263; cf. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 2:79; and R. A. York, *The Rules of Time: Time and Rhythm in the Twentieth-Century Novel* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University, 1999), 10; furthermore, Michael Flaherty argues that people have a synchronization, or normative tempo, that affects their life processes—which would include reading; see Michael G. Flaherty, “The Perception of Time and Situated Engrossment,” *SPQ* 54:1 (1991): 84.

³²³ Higdon, *Time and English Fiction*, 1; and Pierre Gallais, “Hexagonal and Spiral Structure in Medieval Narrative” (trans. Vincent Pollina), *YFS* 0:51 (1974): 115.

³²⁴ Fludernik, “Chronology,” 120; and cf. Ermarth, *Sequel*, 78.

³²⁵ A classic example from historiography is the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo in 1914, an act that ‘ignited’ the Great War; yet at the time of the murder, the event had its own significance, only later was it warped by historiography to fit into the timeline of the much more massive event.

Section 2.1.5.5., the speed of light prohibits many temporal relationships such as true simultaneity or instantaneous effects. In the same way, while narrative appears to have limitless possibilities, narrative is actually restricted in its shape and temporality.³²⁶ The shape restrictions are somewhat obvious: narrative is not limited by genre but by the parameters allowing a text to be a narrative. More complex is the temporal restrictions of narrative; these limitations will be tied into the distinct temporal nature of the given narrative as well as conventions of causality and coherence.³²⁷ For example, historiography has several overt restrictions involving the limits of mimesis and historical distance. Therefore, while temporal conventions and norms can be relativized, warped, and even overturned, the restricted nature of narrative time prevents key temporal contradictions.³²⁸

There are at least three restrictions to narrative temporality. First, narrative time cannot comprise true simultaneous events because narratives are sequences of events.³²⁹ Furthermore, narrators can only narrate two distinct event-intervals in two distinct intervals of time, despite the promise of unorthodox narrative shapes.³³⁰ In addition, agents are limited in their actions by this principle as well—this is the same idea as the relativity of temporal position against simultaneity.³³¹ Second, narrative time is restricted by amplitude. In other words, there are restrictions to the number, type or usage of events if one means to achieve a narrative with some degree of coherence.³³² Furthermore, narrative time precludes an event from being chronicled *in toto*.³³³ Finally, the temporal mechanics of narrative are restricted by possible worlds. As a consequence, impossible narrative worlds are those that lie

³²⁶ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 1:39; R. Drew Griffith, "In the Dark Backward: Time in Pindaric Narrative," *PT* 14:4 (1993): 610; and cf. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocöon: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry* (trans. Edward Allen McCormick; Baltimore: JHU, 1984), 78.

³²⁷ Karlheinz A. Geißler, "A Culture of Temporal Diversity" (trans. Kathleen Cross), *Time & Society* 11:1 (2002): 137.

³²⁸ William L. Ashline, "The Problem of Impossible Fictions," *Style* 29:2 (1995): 221.

³²⁹ Chaudhuri, "Undivided Time," 27.

³³⁰ Heise, *Chronoschisms*, 61.

³³¹ Lubomír Doležel, "Extensional and Intensional Narrative Worlds," *Poetics* 8 (1979): 197; and Ronen, *Possible Worlds*, 182.

³³² N. J. Lowe, *The Classical Plot and the Invention of Western Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2000), 65–6; and cf. Danto, *Narration and Knowledge*, 165.

³³³ Martin Bunzl, "How to Change the Unchanging Past," *Clio* 25:2 (1996): 181.

outside the boundary of narrative and comprehensibility;³³⁴ those that refuse to conform to a time-like curve.³³⁵ Narratives will often employ multiple, possible worlds in order to achieve specific temporal effects. We will tackle these ideas more thoroughly with the Fourth Gospel in Chapter 7.

2.2.2. *Afterword: Narrative Time*

In this chapter, we considered numerous conceptions for the way people try to describe time. After first considering each of these conceptions, I argued that the positivistic result of the Enlightenment Project has been to define time in most all modern situations as either the quasi-Kantian experiential now or the Newtonian mechanistic chronology. In fact, these two temporalities are so deeply entrenched in modern critical texts and our cultural psyche that it requires a significant amount of work to merely identify and probe their assumptions. While both of these conceptions do have merit, we are left with a very significant question: What do we do with texts that use alternative temporalities for which these two conceptions do not possess significant answers? The hegemony of these post-Enlightenment notions of time in modern thought can skew and mistake our understanding of narratives configured without a conventional view of modern time. For this reason, I proposed an original solution to this impasse: to employ a paradigm for understanding the function of time in narrative that will both get around modern assumptions and shed greater light on the ancient text. There are other advantages of selecting a non-standard paradigm as well: first, a new model that originates independent from narrative (or simply rooted in the real world) has a referential factor that prevents one from simply altering or streamlining the model as needed;³³⁶ and second, a new model will locate a greater semantic range for a given text that critics

³³⁴ For example, William Ashline describes five types of impossible worlds in narrative fiction; see Ashline, "Impossible Fictions," 215; as well as Lubomír Doležel, "Mimesis and Possible Worlds," *PT* 9:3 (1988): 493; and Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1979), 234.

³³⁵ While some impossible temporalities cannot be written, others can: the text "In the interim, Duke Wellington went to battle before being born from his mother's womb, while at the same time dying of old age and then returning to England within the fortnight," is writable but not coherent and is restricted from a possible narrative world.

³³⁶ Meyerhoff, *Time in Literature*, 5.

and readers have already explored through a previous paradigm.³³⁷ In the rest of this chapter, I have identified five functions for the temporal paradigm that we will now bring to bear on the Fourth Gospel.

The Fourth Gospel is an ancient and complex narrative. Any attempt to grasp the temporal mechanics of an ancient text will fall short when using a conception of time that was outside the ken of the ancient world. Therefore, we must ask the question: Why would a modern physics paradigm be any better than a quasi-Kantian or absolute temporality? The answer is two-fold. First, we have implicitly shown that the relativistic paradigm for narrative temporality is closer to actual narrative practice. For example, how many narratives exist that are either mechanistically absolute or solely psychological/focused on the now? Outside of experimental fiction, there are few. Yet we may be confident that all narratives are finite; they do twist, stretch and warp time to fit their current configuration; they all have multiple referential worlds.

Second, the modern physics paradigm is not only a better way to approach ancient narrative temporality, but it is also closer to an ancient worldview than is the mechanistic or eternal now views. Time in the ancient world is not recoverable as such, but what we do know about time in the ancient world makes it seem very far away from a rigid absolutism or the psychological sense of nows. Recovering ancient temporalities will require a contemporary metaphor in order for us to come to grips with it. We can best accomplish both of these goals with a relativistic paradigm for narrative time. In the end, our study fills a gap in Biblical studies by approaching the temporality of a text with a clear alternative to Enlightenment-based, implicit assumptions about time that were never a part of the original Biblical narratives. The result will be an original and improved understanding of the workings of ancient gospels. We now turn in the remaining chapters to the temporal mechanics of the Fourth Gospel.

³³⁷ Cf. Fludernik, "Chronology," 120.

CHAPTER THREE

TIME IS FINITE

Time is the longest distance between two places.

—Tennessee Williams

3.1. THE BEGINNING OF TIME

Every narrative includes a beginning and an end; on this, there is general agreement. Surprisingly, however, when texts such as the Fourth Gospel become the subject of questions regarding narrative beginnings and endings, the only agreement often reached is that the Gospel in fact *has* a beginning and an end. An informed reader of the Gospel recognizes that the beginning of the Fourth Gospel is one of the most significant narrative elements of the New Testament. At the same time, scholars often downplay, discount, or even disregard the end of the same Gospel. While there is great irony in this situation, there is also a certain amount of confusion and contradiction. In this chapter, I will start with the most basic elements of narrative structure—the beginning and ending—and work to overturn points of confusion and contradiction by considering their temporal mechanics.

Time is finite, and it has a definite point at which it begins and ends; I previously demonstrated this in Section 2.1.5.1. In order to develop a paradigm by which we may best comprehend the time of narrative, I also demonstrated that narrative time is finite and it functions in a similar manner as the time of modern physics (Section 2.2.1.1.). Thus, both time and narrative have points of beginning and ending; time is bounded by singularities while narrative is bounded by prologues and epilogues, introductions and conclusions. Just as singularities are themselves complex, so too are narrative edges: the time of a narrative may have more than one aperture or closure at any terminal point, and may be far more heterogeneous than a single, straight line. In this chapter, I will explore the principal temporal boundary points of the Fourth Gospel, and introduce the idea of temporal apertures and closures within all narrative texts. In the process, I will consider the function of temporality as it enters and exits this particular Gospel text.

The temporality of a text starts at its beginning, as do all other aspects of narrative textuality that follow. Even so, the formal study of narrative beginnings remains somewhat limited in scope. This may be a result of their significance being overlooked, or simply the fact that beginnings are more often than not “always troublesome”¹ in their relationship to the narrative whole. Yet beginnings provide an edge by which a reader enters the narrative world, and they set the temporality for the narrative (though the narrative may eventually change or subvert that temporality). This edge is not only textual but also *temporal*, in that time is always bounded at the beginning. Especially with narratives such as the Fourth Gospel, the initial temporal conditions of the beginning affect the reading and understanding of the texts.

Aristotle defined a narrative beginning as “that which itself does not follow necessarily from anything else, but some second thing naturally exists or occurs after it.”² While Aristotle’s *Poetics* addressed the beginnings of tragedies in particular, any inquiry into the specific nature and function of narrative beginnings normally rises above generic concerns.³ Furthermore, even though beginnings are one of the most basic elements of textual structure,⁴ delineating the beginning of a text is often problematic. One reason for this is that the edge of the text is often conjoined or entangled with the remainder of the text,⁵ and another reason is due to the ancillary functions of beginnings within a text. For this reason, I will focus on the functional rather than ontological aspects of narrative beginnings as they relate to the temporal mechanics of the text.

A narrative possesses a beginning due to temporality; without temporality, a text would not have a beginning or end.⁶ However, narrative

¹ “Beginnings are always troublesome,” writes George Eliot in her letters, and “conclusions are the weak point of most authors...some of the fault lies in the very nature of a conclusion, which is at best a negation”; George Eliot, quoted in Kermode, *Sense*, 174.

² Ironically, Aristotle believed time had no beginning but narrative did; see Aristotle, *Poetics*, 7.

³ Joseph Tyson, “The Birth Narratives and the Beginning of Luke’s Gospel,” *Semeia* 52 (1990): 106.

⁴ Thomas L. Brodie, *The Gospel According to John* (New York: Oxford University, 1993), 25–6.

⁵ As is the case with the Fourth Gospel; see Edward Said, “Beginnings,” in *Narrative Dynamics: Essays on Time, Plot, Closure, and Frames* (ed. Brian Richardson; Columbus: OSU, 2002), 256.

⁶ Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History*, 51.

beginnings function in a temporally relative, as opposed to absolute, manner. On one hand, a text is always narrated from a larger text; in other words, a narrative such as the Fourth Gospel (*sjuzhet*) is actually a sub-narrative of the history of the Johannine community, the historical Jesus, the *kerygma* of the early Church, or creation itself (all *fabula*), depending upon the view of the reader. Therefore, the opening edge of the Gospel is relative and not absolute in that the Gospel's prologue could have started at the Garden of Eden, the Maccabean revolt, or even the birth of Jesus. There are a near infinite number of temporal moments on which the edge of the Gospel narrative could have been placed;⁷ yet, there is always a reason for the beginning chosen for a narrative. Theoretically speaking, all narratives can potentially begin *in media res*,⁸ all the while maintaining their finite nature.

On the other hand, narrative beginnings are tied up with the text itself. One can locate the beginning of a text but cannot truly separate or isolate the beginning from the rest of the text.⁹ Even if the author were to clearly demarcate and label the sections of a narrative 'beginning,' 'middle,' and 'end,' there must exist some level of temporal coherence and thus intermingling of time, theme, and mythos in order for us to label the text a single narrative in the first place (Section 5.2.). This coherence allows for the most rudimentary of temporal structure: if nothing else, an event may be located in relation to the beginning or end of the text.¹⁰ Therefore, the horizon of the beginning of a text is relative rather than absolute. Similarly, purpose is tied to the beginning of a text,¹¹ if nothing other than temporally. Yet beginnings also temporally determine the function of the text and the reader's experience of the text. Beginnings impel a strong sense of what happens next (or before) in time, and that temporality is determined by the relationship with the beginning.¹² Therefore, they are highly influential; a notion

⁷ M. Eugene Boring, "Mark 1:1–15 and the Beginning of the Gospel," *Semeia* 52 (1990): 43; and cf. K. N. Chaudhuri, "Undivided Time in Undivided Space: The Problematic of 'Polyphonic' History," *CK* 2:3 (1993): 29.

⁸ This is true in a very general sense; it would not include narratives where there is no temporal point before the 'first' temporal point, e.g. creation; see Miller, "Problematic," 4.

⁹ Kenneth C. Dewar, "Where to Begin and How: Narrative Openings in Donald Creighton's Historiography," *CHR* 72:3 (1991): 351.

¹⁰ Kort, *Modern Fiction and Human Time*, 12.

¹¹ Morna D. Hooker, *Beginnings: Keys that Open the Gospels* (Harrisburg: TPI, 1997), xiii–xiv; and Childs, *Myth*, 89.

¹² Kort, *Modern Fiction and Human Time*, 138.

that Meir Sternberg identifies as the “primacy effect” of beginnings.¹³ In more common parlance, beginnings foreshadow the middle and ending of the narrative.¹⁴ Beginnings also have various plot functions as well.¹⁵ For this reason, the temporal determinism that characterizes narrative beginnings is unattractive to those preferring free play in the text.¹⁶

3.1.1. *The Temporal Function of the Prologue*

Among Biblical beginnings, the opening of the Fourth Gospel is one of the most renowned and most discussed. Anyone familiar with the history of Gospel criticism is aware of the debates surrounding the form and pedigree of the Johannine prologue—if that is indeed what we should call the opening of the Gospel. Throughout the centuries, scholars, critics and readers have labeled the beginning of the Fourth Gospel a prologue, a hymn,¹⁷ a foyer,¹⁸ a cultic-liturgical poem,¹⁹ an overture,²⁰

¹³ Meir Sternberg, *Expositional Modes and Temporal Ordering in Fiction* (Baltimore: JHU, 1978), 96.

¹⁴ Dewar, “Where to Begin and How,” 352.

¹⁵ In his study of beginnings, James Phelan presents four functions of narrative beginnings (as summarized by Brian Richardson in *Narrative Dynamics*): “exposition (setting in its broadest sense), initiation (the opening instability that initiates the major action), introduction (initial rhetorical transactions among narrator, implied author, narrative audience, and authorial audience), and entrance (the actual reader’s movement from outside the text to a specific location in the authorial audience)”; see James Phelan, “Beginnings and Endings: Theories and Typologies of How Novels Open and Close,” in *Encyclopedia of the Novel* (vol. 1; ed. Paul Schellinger; Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1998), 96–99.

¹⁶ Jacques Derrida argues that beginnings forestall and contradict the remainder of the text; see Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination* (trans. Barbara Johnson; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1981), 9.

¹⁷ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (vol. 1; ABC; New York: Doubleday, 1966), cxxxiii; Alfred Wikenhauser, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (RNT 4; Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1961), 39; Günther Keil, *Das Johannesevangelium: Ein philosophischer und theologischer Kommentar* (Göttingen: V&R, 1997), 18, 29; Sharon H. Ringe, *Wisdom’s Friends: Community and Christology in the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville: WJK, 1999), 48–53; and John Painter, *The Quest for the Messiah: The History, Literature and Theology of the Johannine Community* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 107.

¹⁸ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 111.

¹⁹ Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John* (trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 14; contra this position see Carson, *Gospel According to John*, 112; and Smith, “Narrative Beginnings,” 4.

²⁰ Wilhelm Heitmüller, “Das Evangelium des Johannes,” in *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments* (ed. Johannes Weiss; Göttingen: V&R, 1908), 716; and Dominic Crossan, *The Gospel of Eternal Life: Reflections on the Theology of St. John* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1967), 44.

and a commentary²¹ or summary²² on the Gospel. Furthermore, there is widespread disagreement as to whether the Fourth Evangelist composed the beginning, and if so, when. Clearly, the latest generation of scholars has begun to push the pendulum back toward the idea that the beginning of John forms a coherent prologue to the Gospel, and it is from the perspective that the Fourth Evangelist composed a prologue with dramatic and epic elements that I will consider the temporal function of the Johannine prologue.²³

One reason for the debate and the drama of the beginning of John is its excessive nature; it appears unconventional and transcendental in its themes and purposes—far more than is needed to introduce a human Gospel.²⁴ Yet we should not misconstrue its dramatic and epic qualities as either abnormal or overly poetic; epic openings are quite common in the history of literature. The opening of Genesis is unmistakably epic and transcendental. Likewise, the prologue of the Qumran War Scroll is an eschatological epic.²⁵ Similar to the beginning of the Fourth Gospel, the beginning of the Job narrative utilizes an omniscient narrator and a divine perspective.²⁶ In his *Historiae Philippicae*, Pompeius Trogus opens with “in the beginning” and with epic flair retells the empire-building of Ninus of Assyria.²⁷ From the *Epic of Gilgamesh* to William Faulkner,²⁸ unconventional prologues are typical features of narrative texts. The critics of such prologues span the history of literature as well.²⁹

²¹ Raymond F. Collins, *These Things Have Been Written: Studies on the Fourth Gospel* (Louvain Theological & Pastoral Monographs 2; Louvain: Peeters, 1990), 153.

²² Edwyn Clement Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel* (revised ed.; London: Faber and Faber, 1950), 137.

²³ Smith, “Narrative Beginnings,” 4; Elaine H. Pagels, “Exegesis of Genesis 1 in the Gospels of Thomas and John,” *JBL* 118:3 (1999): 489; Hooker, *Beginnings*, 65; Musa W. Dube and Jeffrey L. Staley, “Descending from and Ascending into Heaven: A Post-colonial Analysis of Travel, Space and Power in John,” in *John and Postcolonialism: Travel, Space and Power* (ed. Musa W. Dube and Jeffrey L. Staley; London: Continuum/Sheffield Academic, 2002), 6; and cf. Tyson, “Birth Narratives,” 105.

²⁴ Werner H. Kelber, “The Birth of a Beginning: John 1:1–18,” *Semeia* 52 (1990): 122.

²⁵ 1QM 1:1–17.

²⁶ Köstenberger, *Encountering John*, 49.

²⁷ While the *Historiae Philippica* is no longer extant, Justin quoted extensively from it (c. 4th century AD); see Pompeius Trogus, *Philippic History*, 1.1; and Wilcox, *Measure of Times Past*, 110.

²⁸ Martin Kreiswirth, “Centers, Openings, and Endings: Some Faulknerian Constants,” *AL* 56:1 (1984): 41.

²⁹ N. Clayton Croy, “Where the Gospel Text Begins: A Non-Theological Interpretation of Mark 1:1,” *NovT* 43:2 (2001): 105; Brodie, *Gospel According to John*, 133; and cf. Smith, “Narrative Beginnings,” 7.

The Fourth Gospel begins *ab ovo*, at the beginning, as opposed to *in media res*, in the middle, the standard method of narrative beginnings popularized by Horace and Aristotle.³⁰ With its popularity undimmed in modernity, the *in media res* approach has a seemingly tyrannical stranglehold on narrative beginnings—although history is replete with sterling aperture revolutionaries.³¹ So standard is this opening that a small minority of scholars actually argue the Fourth Gospel begins *in media res*,³² however, even if one were to amputate and discount the prologue, there is no distinctive beginning which follows from a middle exposition necessary for such a designation. In general, such a designation assumes a temporally linear text—a heretofore unproven assertion about this Gospel.

The *ab ovo* opening of the Fourth Gospel temporally affects the narrative in several ways. First, the initial lines of John produce a “boundary effect” in a reader: the first sentence is read, pondered, and savored due to its transcendental nature.³³ This is quite unlike most modern mass-market novels, in which the active opening sentences encourage the reader to engage immediately the narrative (again, usually coupled with an *in media res* approach). In contrast, the beginning of John engenders almost a ‘once upon a time’ reaction.³⁴ Second, Jn 1:1–3 is an extreme form of narrative summary, and the remainder of the prologue recaps for the reader the narrative past and brings the reader and narrative together to the textual, temporal present.³⁵ Finally, this type of beginning tends to introduce overarching storylines and temporalities that are progressively or implicitly revealed.³⁶ Due to the nature of the prologue, Northrop Frye went so far as to suggest that the Evangelist intended the Fourth Gospel to be first in the Christian canon.³⁷

In *Prometheus*, Aeschylus (525–456 BC) uses temporality to demonstrate justice and wisdom to the gods;³⁸ in the same way, the Fourth Evangelist draws on temporality in the prologue to establish cosmological truths

³⁰ Richardson, *Narrative Dynamics*, 249.

³¹ Said, “Beginnings,” 260.

³² Tovey, *Narrative Art*, 34; and potentially Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 54.

³³ Bestgen and Vonk, “Temporal Adverbials,” 76.

³⁴ Brodie, *Gospel According to John*, 136.

³⁵ Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History*, 114.

³⁶ Robert C. Tannehill, “Beginning to Study ‘How Gospels Begin,’” *Semeia* 52 (1990): 185; and Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, “Ending at the Beginning: A Response,” *Semeia* 52 (1990): 180.

³⁷ Frye, *Great Code*, 207.

³⁸ Romilly, *Time in Greek Tragedy*, 68.

about God's work in human history. Because temporality is an "inaugural motif" of the text,³⁹ it plays a crucial role in the development of the Johannine narrative.⁴⁰ The prologue contextualizes time from its very beginning to the occasion of the Word dwelling among us. The reader's movement is solely anisotropic from a point of beginning to a future event.⁴¹ Two prime temporal motifs in the prologue are the 'Word' (λόγος) and the concept of creation.

Literary critics have long stressed the paradoxical and dialectical nature of aperture and closure in narrative. This nature also exists within the Johannine conception of the λόγος. While thinkers have remarked on the theological paradox of the λόγος,⁴² there exists as well the possibility of a temporal dialectic of the λόγος. In one respect, the Johannine λόγος is foundational, existing outside of spacetime as the transcendental signified;⁴³ the λόγος is unbounded by time.⁴⁴ Yet the temporally infinite λόγος exists—and to a certain degree is captured—within a finite, bounded narrative world. Further, while it is possible λόγος is a temporally static ideal, it is difficult to imagine a word unspoken.⁴⁵ A spoken λόγος within the sphere of creation represents temporal dynamism and change, and contrasts sharply with the supratemporal Johannine λόγος.⁴⁶

Another temporal motif found in the prologue of the Fourth Gospel is the idea of cosmological beginning. Time, narrative and creation are finite entities that each possesses a beginning and an ending. Unlike

³⁹ White, *Metahistory*, 5.

⁴⁰ Adele Reinhartz, *The Word in the World: The Cosmological Tale in the Fourth Gospel* (SBLMS 45; Atlanta: Scholars, 1992), 18.

⁴¹ Ted Peters, "Eschatology: Eternal Now or Cosmic Future?" *Zygon* 36:2 (2001): 354.

⁴² For example, Hermann Strathmann, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (NTD 4; Göttingen: V&R, 1963), 30–1; C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1995), 263–85; and John Sanford, *Mystical Christianity: A Psychological Commentary on the Gospel of John* (New York: Crossroad, 1993), 18–26.

⁴³ Kelber, "Birth of a Beginning," 124.

⁴⁴ Augustine, *Sermons*, 117.4.6.

⁴⁵ Similarly, Wesley Kort writes that "the time of beginnings, the time of cosmogony and of the gods, is not back there, locked at some point at the beginning of a sequence of time, but is eternally present and available"; see Kort, *Modern Fiction and Human Time*, 66.

⁴⁶ John Chrysostom draws a different contrast in writing that "even as the word *being*, when it is said of a man, means only the present time, but when said about God means eternity, so also *was*, when predicated of our nature, indicates past time to us—and that time limited—but when predicated of God indicates eternity"; see Chrysostom, *Homilies on John*, 3.2.

the majority opinion of the ancient and modern world, that *ex nihilo nihil fit*, the Johannine prologue echoed and affirmed the *creatio ex nihilo* cosmology that began in Genesis and continued through Jewish philosophical and religious thought.⁴⁷ Included in the *creatio ex nihilo* concept is the idea that time was created and therefore finite.⁴⁸ This idea illustrates a radical concept of temporality—that transcendence is neither eternal nor sempiternal but unbounded by time. In the next section, I will explore the interpretation of temporal beginnings in the Fourth Gospel.

CASE STUDY—*Creatio ex nihilo*—Genesis and John

Whereas the idea of finite time is virtually synonymous with a temporal beginning in the *creatio ex nihilo* concept, we must briefly consider recent arguments that the *creatio ex nihilo* concept is not apparent in a 1st century early Christian milieu.⁴⁹ In contrast to this argument, there are several key proofs that a *creatio ex nihilo* idea is consistent with ancient Hebrew thoughts on cosmology. In fact, in the prologue to the Fourth Gospel, there appears a clear continuation of the *creatio ex nihilo* thought.⁵⁰ If this concept did exist in the ancient world, then we can demonstrate that the Evangelist knowingly and willfully presented a *creatio ex nihilo* perspective, and therefore an assertion of the finitude of time, to his audience. We will briefly consider five proofs.

First, the best understanding of “in the beginning” (בראשית) in Genesis 1 is the presupposition “that there was as yet nothing in exis-

⁴⁷ See also Section 2.1.5.1. for more details.

⁴⁸ Philo, *On the Creation of the World*, 26; Frye, *Great Code*, 71; Masanobu Endo, *Creation and Christology: A Study on the Johannine Prologue in the Light of Early Jewish Creation Accounts* (WUNT 2:149; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 54–5; and William Lane Craig, “Timelessness & Omnitemporality,” in *God & Time: Four Views* (ed. Gregory E. Ganssle; Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2001), 131–2.

⁴⁹ For example, Gerhard May claims this conception was developed in the late 2nd century as an “anti-gnostic” polemic; see Gerhard May, *Creatio ex Nihilo: The Doctrine of ‘Creation out of Nothing’ in Early Christian Thought* (trans. A. S. Worrall; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 180.

⁵⁰ According to Evan Pollard, Theophilus (late 2nd century AD) is the first extant orthodox Christian to use the Johannine prologue to support a *creatio ex nihilo* position; see T. Evan Pollard, “Cosmology and the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel,” *VC* 12:3 (1958): 147.

tence before the act of creation.”⁵¹ In fact, this is the case even if one were to prefer to use Gen 1:1 as a dependent clause, based on the remaining language in Gen 1:1–2. Accordingly, God “made” (ברא) the heavens and the earth, but this must be a creative activity as there is no material from which to fashion the heavens and the earth: all was “absolutely formless” (תהו ובהו).⁵² Second, a number of other Biblical passages that predate the Fourth Gospel appear familiar with the concept of *creatio ex nihilo*.⁵³ For these reasons, we may feel confident that “before the world time had no existence.”⁵⁴ Besides Philo, a significant number of thinkers have reflected on and argued for the unique creation from nothing perspective espoused in Genesis and John from at least the 1st century AD.⁵⁵ In the end, creation and the Johannine narrative both speak of the finitude of time—beginning *ab ovo*.

3.1.2. *The Temporal Function of Ἐν ἀρχῇ*

Delving deeper into the temporal function of the prologue offers the critic a strong possibility of many Faustian dilemmas; for this reason, we will focus solely on the role and development of the temporal marker “in the beginning” (ἐν ἀρχῇ).⁵⁶ To begin a narrative with some lexical form of the word ἀρχή was not particularly unusual in the ancient

⁵¹ Henricus Renckens, *Israel's Concept of the Beginning: The Theology of Genesis 1–3* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1964), 86.

⁵² Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (trans. John H. Marks; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), 47.

⁵³ For example, Gen 1:1f.; Isa 44:24; Prov 8:22–4; 2 Macc 7:28; 2 Bar. 21:4; 4 Ezra 6:6, 38; Jub. 2:1–3; 2 En. 25:1ff., 26:1; Jos. Asen. 12:1–2; Odes Sol. 16:18–9; 1QS 3:15; 1QM 10:13; furthermore, the presence of the *creatio ex nihilo* concept in many of these texts has been extensively and persuasively argued for in Paul Copan's recent exegetical study; see Paul Copan, “Is *creatio ex nihilo* a Post-Biblical Invention? An Examination of Gerhard May's Proposal,” *TJ* 17 (1996): 77–93.

⁵⁴ Philo, *On the Creation of the World*, 26 (Yonge).

⁵⁵ Supporters of the *creatio ex nihilo* position include Augustine, *Against the Manichees*, 6; Grosseteste, *Hexaëmeron*, 1.8.4; Wolfgang Musculus, *Commentariorum in Evangelistam Ioannem: Heptas Prima* (Basel: Bartholomäus Westheimer, 1545), 60; Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1994), 298–305; von Rad, *Genesis*, 47; Renckens, *Concept*, 86; Frye, *Great Code*, 71; Endo, *Creation and Christology*, 207; Craig, “Creation and Conservation,” 177; and J. C. O'Neill, “How Early is the Doctrine of *Creatio ex Nihilo*?” *JTS* 53:2 (2002); opponents include May, *Creatio ex Nihilo*; and Thomas L. Brodie, *Genesis as Dialogue: A Literary, Historical, and Theological Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2001), 133.

⁵⁶ For more details on the nature and function of temporal markers, please see section 4.2.1.

world.⁵⁷ However, there are two factors that affect the Johannine reading of the ἐν ἀρχῇ marker. First, one of the difficulties in interpreting this marker, as well as the rest of the prologue, is the lack of self-evident reference points.⁵⁸ The fact that ἐν ἀρχῇ is itself a temporal marker only adds to the abstract nature of the prologue.⁵⁹ The second factor is the relationship with the primary referential antecedent, the beginning of Genesis. The relationship between these openings is the key to an accurate understanding of the temporal function of the Johannine ἐν ἀρχῇ.

To be sure, there are three qualities at play in the ἐν ἀρχῇ marker; there is the theological quality, greatly discussed; there is the epic trait, the ‘once upon a time’ characteristic that we discussed above; and then there is the temporal value⁶⁰ of the indexical that relates primarily to the beginning of Genesis. The Fourth Gospel opens with the same two words as the opening of Genesis in the LXX, and there is near universal recognition of a relationship between the two.⁶¹ However, the nature of this relationship remains poorly defined.⁶² At the same time, the direct correlation between these prologues is unmistakable: beyond the same

⁵⁷ Boring, “Beginning,” 52.

⁵⁸ Norman R. Petersen, *The Gospel of John and the Sociology of Light: Language and Characterization in the Fourth Gospel* (Valley Forge: TPI, 1993), 10.

⁵⁹ Michelle Beer, “Temporal Indexicals and the Passage of Time,” *PQ* 38:151 (1988): 163.

⁶⁰ These words are temporal in nature and in purpose; for example, Udo Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology in the Gospel of John: An Investigation of the Place of the Fourth Gospel in the Johannine School* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 212; Reinhartz, *Word in the World*, 18; cf. David A. Reed, “How Semitic was John? Rethinking the Hellenistic Background to John 1:1,” *ATHR* 85:4 (2003): 712–5; and contra, for example, Ed L. Miller, “‘In the Beginning’: A Christological Transparency,” *NTS* 45:4 (1999): 589–90; Luise Schottroff, *Der Glaubende und die feindliche Welt* (WMANT 37; Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1970), 232; and James Richard Mensch, *The Beginning of the Gospel According to Saint John: Philosophical Reflections* (AUS 5/121; New York: Peter Lang, 1992), 18.

⁶¹ For example, strong proponents include Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 31; Craig A. Evans, *Word and Glory: On the Exegetical and Theological Background of John’s Prologue* (JSNTSup 89; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993), 77; Marc Girard, “La structure heptapartite du quatrième évangile,” *RSR* 5:4 (1975/6): 351; Pollard, “Cosmology,” 148; C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (London: SPCK, 1956), 127; and Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of John’s Gospel: Issues & Commentary* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2001), 73.

⁶² Two notable exceptions, for example, would be Peder Borgen, who argues Jn 1:1 is an *exposition* of Gen 1:1; see Peder Borgen, “Logos Was the True Light: Contributions to the Interpretation of the Prologue of John,” *NovT* 14:2 (1972): 117; cf. Hooker, *Beginnings*, 66, 71; and Daniel Boyarin, who views the beginning of the John as a *midrash*

word usage for the beginning, there are similar cosmological overtones and archetypal language,⁶³ literary parallels,⁶⁴ and links in the Biblical and Targumic texts.⁶⁵ Clearly, the relationship between these prologues is more than mere allusion.

On the one hand, Biblical scholars typically recognize that the opening ἐν ἀρχῇ (בראשית) of Genesis clearly refers to the moment of creation.⁶⁶ On the other hand, the standard perception among Biblical scholars is that the Johannine ἐν ἀρχῇ refers to a primeval/eternal time of beginning before creation.⁶⁷ As a result, it is not unusual to

on the opening of Genesis; see Daniel Boyarin, "The Gospel of the *Memra*: Jewish Binitarianism and the Prologue to John," *HTR* 94:3 (2001): 279.

⁶³ Hoskyns, *Fourth Gospel*, 140.

⁶⁴ Mary Coloe, "The Structure of the Johannine Prologue and Genesis 1," *ABR* 45 (1997): 53.

⁶⁵ For example, Prov 8; Wisd Sol 7:25–7; 1QS 11:11; Gen 1:1 Neofiti; see Ben Witherington III, *John's Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville: WJK, 1995), 52.

⁶⁶ For example, see von Rad, *Genesis*, 49; Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 104–8; U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis* (trans. Israel Abrahams; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961), 20; Gerhard F. Hasel, "Recent Translations of Genesis 1:1: A Critical Look," *BT* 22 (1971): 154–67; Martin Luther, *The Creation: A Commentary on the First Five Chapters of the Book of Genesis* (trans. Henry Cole; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1858), 26–7; Chrysostom, *Homilies on Genesis*, 2; Franz Delitzsch, *A New Commentary on Genesis* (vol. 1; trans. Sophia Taylor; New York: Scribner & Welford, 1889), 72–6; Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary* (trans. John J. Scullion; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1974), 81; and contra E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* (ABC; New York: Doubleday, 1964), 12.

⁶⁷ For example, Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to John* (vol. 1; trans. Kevin Smyth; New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 221; Barrett, *Gospel According to St. John*, 127; Ernst Haenchen, *John* (vol. 1; Hermeneia; trans. Robert Funk; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 109; John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 527; Siegfried Schulz, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (NTD 4; Göttingen: V&R, 1972), 18; R. H. Lightfoot, *St. John's Gospel: A Commentary* (ed. C. F. Evans; Oxford: Clarendon, 1956), 78; Barclay M. Newman and Eugene A. Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of John* (London: UBS, 1980), 6; Ulrich Wilckens, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (NTD 4; Göttingen: V&R, 2000), 27; Köstenberger, *Encountering John*, 49; Hooker, *Beginnings*, 73; Jörg Frey, *Die johanneische Eschatologie II: Das johanneische Zeitverständnis* (WUNT 110; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1998), 158; Udo Schnelle, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (THKNT 4; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1998), 31; Wilson Paroschi, *Incarnation and Covenant in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel (John 1:1–18)* (EUS 23/820; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2006), 25; Miller, "In the Beginning," 589; Ringe, *Wisdom's Friends*, 49; Kenneth Grayston, *The Gospel of John* (Narrative Commentaries; Philadelphia: TPI, 1990), 4; Samuel Byrskog, *Story as History—History as Story: The Gospel Tradition in the Context of Ancient Oral History* (Boston: Brill, 2002), 240; Endo, *Creation and Christology*, 197; Kermode, "John," 445; Michael Theobald, *Im Anfang war das Wort: Textlinguistische Studie zum Johannesprolog* (SBib 106; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1983), 41; Hans Weder, *Einblicke ins Evangelium: Exegetische Beiträge zur neutestamentlichen Hermeneutik* (Göttingen: V&R, 1997), 405; I. de la Potterie, "La notion de 'commencement' dans les écrits johanniques," in *Die Kirche*

read commentators who first list associations or connections between these two Biblical beginnings, only to turn around and state that the Johannine ἐν ἀρχῇ “is not the beginning of creation but the absolute beginning.”⁶⁸ Even more curious about the standard perception is that in Jn 1:3–5, critics now suddenly view the subject at hand as creation, yet there are no textual movements one might expect to find indicating this radical change from eternity to creation.⁶⁹ In fact, many studies on the prologue insist the creation motif runs throughout the beginning of the Gospel while at the same time not distinguishing the role of the Johannine ἐν ἀρχῇ in creation.⁷⁰ Clearly, there is an inconsistency between the concept of ἐν ἀρχῇ in Genesis and in the Fourth Gospel—at least the standard perception of ἐν ἀρχῇ in the Fourth Gospel.

The standard perception arose due to theological and philosophical convictions and evolved into what scholars now regard as the mainstream position. In the first centuries AD, Gnostics, Arians, and other heterodox clusters were extant and active along the fringes of the early church. As each sect attempted to transform the understanding of the Johannine prologue to fit their own cosmological presuppositions,⁷¹ it became necessary to defend the pre-existence—and therefore the orthodox divinity—of the λόγος. Over the centuries, these orthodox defenses mixed with the ubiquitous Aristotelian paradigm of the eternality of the universe,⁷² fabricating the idea of two beginnings: the beginning

des Anfangs: für Heinz Schürmann (ed. Rudolf Schnackenburg, Josef Ernst, and Joachim Wanke; Freiburg: Herder, 1978), 385; D. Francois Tolmie, “The Characterization of God in the Fourth Gospel,” *JST* 69 (1998): 62; and Bruno Barnhart, *The Good Wine: Reading John from the Center* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist, 1993), 57.

⁶⁸ Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology*, 213; also Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 1:4; Schnackenburg, *Gospel According to John*, 1:232; and George R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (2nd ed.; WBC 36; Waco: Word, 1999), 10.

⁶⁹ See for example Miller, “In the Beginning,” 589; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (revised ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 190; Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 34; and cf. Collins, *These Things*, 153.

⁷⁰ For example, see W. F. Hambly, “Creation and Gospel: A Brief Comparison of Genesis 1,1–2,4 and John 1,1–2,12,” in *SE* (vol. 5; ed. F. L. Cross; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968); and Calum M. Carmichael, *The Story of Creation: Its Origin and Its Interpretation in Philo and the Fourth Gospel* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1996), 35–55.

⁷¹ Pollard, “Cosmology,” 147; Pagels, “Exegesis of Genesis 1,” 479; cf. Elaine H. Pagels, *The Johannine Gospel in Gnostic Exegesis: Heracleon’s Commentary on John* (SBLMS 17; Nashville: Abingdon, 1973), 28–34; Evans, *Word and Glory*, 47–76; *Orig. World*; and *Gos. Truth*.

⁷² Cf. Blanchette, *Perfection*, 222.

of creation and a primeval or ‘absolute’ beginning.⁷³ Consequently, the problem with this view of dual beginnings—aside from logic issues—is not the theological conviction for orthodoxy but the philosophical ideal of two beginnings; if time is bounded at creation, then there can be no intermediate time of primeval beginnings. In the majority opinion, there are *two beginnings* set in an eternal cosmological paradigm posing as an orthodox defense of the Johannine prologue. In contrast, in the 5th century AD, Augustine recognized the implicit contradiction in the idea of a primeval beginning,⁷⁴ and in the 16th century, Martin Luther (1483–1546) strongly alluded to the Johannine beginning as creation.⁷⁵ Increasingly, a few modern scholars have eschewed the standard perception and have hinted at the possibility of a relationship between creation and the ἀρχή referred to in the prologue of the Gospel of John.⁷⁶

At the outset, overcoming the inconsistency of the standard perception requires the recognition that the ἀρχή in the Johannine prologue is *directly analogous* to the ἀρχή in the Genesis prologue, and refers specifically to the beginning of creation.⁷⁷ More than an allusion or a *midrash*, the direct correlation of the two prologues allows the Fourth Evangelist to tie the story of the Johannine Jesus to the first work of

⁷³ Another possible scenario is that the Gnostic Heracleon (c. AD 145–180) and/or the Thomas tradition held this view of two beginnings, and being unchallenged on this by Origen and other early church apologists, his/their ideas seeped into the mainstream (or were already mainstream and uncontroversial by that time); see Pagels, *Johannine Gospel*, 47; and Pagels, “Exegesis of Genesis 1,” 479.

⁷⁴ Cited by John Calvin; see John Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John* (vol. 1; Calvin’s Commentaries 17; trans. William Pringle; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 28.

⁷⁵ Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works: Sermons on the Gospel of St. John* (vol. 22; ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Daniel E. Poellot; trans. Martin H. Bertram; Saint Louis: Concordia, 1961), 13–4, 26.

⁷⁶ Notably, Hoskyns, Bruce and Ringe underscore the ‘creation’ aspect of Jn 1:1; see Hoskyns, *Fourth Gospel*, 141; F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 30; and Ringe, *Wisdom’s Friends*, 49; further, Witherington and Godet, and to a smaller degree, Carson, Thompson, and Endo, make positive statements in this general direction; see Witherington, *John’s Wisdom*, 53; Frédéric Louis Godet, *Commentary on John’s Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1978), 244; Carson, *Gospel According to John*, 104; Marianne Meye Thompson, *The Incarnate Word: Perspectives on Jesus in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1988), 40; and Endo, *Creation and Christology*, 206–7.

⁷⁷ Craig Keener’s recent commentary appears closest to my argument tying John 1:1 to the creation of the universe; see Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (vol. 1; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2003), 365–9; also close is Boyarin, “Gospel of the *Memra*,” 268; Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John* (vol. 1; Minneapolis: Klock & Klock, 1980), 16–7; cf. Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Trinity*, 2.13; and G. H. C. MacGregor, *The Gospel of John* (MNTC; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1928), 4.

God in the world (Gen 1:1–3). Furthermore, this solution brings the temporal marker ἐν ἀρχῇ into consistent usage with its primary referential antecedent. However, the philosophical change brought about by this solution raises a theological concern that we must answer. This concern was put best by John Calvin (1509–1564), who asked, “Now when men date *the beginning* from the origin of heaven and earth, do they not reduce Christ to the common order of the world, from which he is excluded in express terms by this passage (Jn 1:1)?”⁷⁸ Truly, the answer to this question posed by Calvin is ‘no’ if one adheres to the model of a finite universe that God created *ex nihilo*.

The answer to this long-standing theological riddle is that ἐν ἀρχῇ can refer to the beginning of creation without reducing the λόγος to the order of the world due to the nature and function of time in a finite universe as opposed to the commonly-held infinite universe. In the traditional approach of two beginnings, equating ἐν ἀρχῇ with the creation of heaven and Earth—the second beginning—affects the Christology of the λόγος because the λόγος is merely present in the time of second beginnings, and therefore may not be pre-existent with God in the time of primeval beginning or eternal forms. In other words, Christ is explicitly linked with the material world rather than eternal forms.⁷⁹ However, when one jettisons the eternal universe model, the λόγος is linked with a *different* beginning: in a finite model of the universe, there is only one point of beginning, and if the λόγος was present at that one beginning, then the λόγος is unbound by that beginning, and thus is outside of creation.⁸⁰ To be outside of creation in a finite universe model is to be uncreated, pre-existent, and divine—the exact nature of the λόγος.⁸¹

Unlike the traditional approach, this understanding of ἐν ἀρχῇ does not locate the λόγος at any time of beginning; instead, it places the λόγος squarely at the point of creation. Thus the λόγος, bounded by the event horizon of creation, possesses positional preexistence rather than temporal eternity—the λόγος *is* God (θεός). This view of ἐν ἀρχῇ takes into account a more accurate view of temporality while

⁷⁸ Calvin, *Commentary*, 1:27.

⁷⁹ As would be the case in a Gnostic interpretation of Scripture; see footnotes above.

⁸⁰ Luther, *Luther's Works*, 22:14; and Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Trinity*, 2.13.

⁸¹ This is consistent with Job 38:7, part of a poetic passage alluding to the creation of the Earth, although the popular understanding of this verse is that angels were present at (the point of) Creation.

restoring the relationship between the prologues of John and Genesis. It also returns hermeneutical harmony to the context of the Johannine prologue by keeping the focus on creation.⁸² The Fourth Evangelist was not trying to paint an idyllic picture of eternity but offer a lucid snapshot of creation—one in which the uncreated λόγος is present and active.⁸³ Finally, this idea does not undermine the preexistence of the λόγος; it puts greater emphasis on it.⁸⁴

The prologue of the Fourth Gospel represents a temporal boundary of a narrative text (and a finite creation) that is strongly contrasted against the unbounded and therefore divine λόγος. In the end, the ἐν ἀρχῇ marker of the prologue sets an inspired tone for the *ab ovo* opening of the Gospel. This opening offers the reader a distinct cosmological aperture coupled with epic overtones in which to access the narrative text, and avoids the ill-defined *illud tempus* of the majority opinion. In a similar manner, we will consider the majority opinion of the Johannine epilogue in the next section; however, instead of overturning an ambiguous understanding of temporality, I will work to move from an unambiguous climax to the indefinite closure echoed in the temporal mechanics of the epilogue of the Fourth Gospel.

CASE STUDY—Beginnings—John 1:1–19

Throughout the centuries, readers of the Fourth Gospel have proposed a complex variety of theories to explain the temporality of the Johannine prologue. In many cases, these readers based their assumptions on multiple temporal or thematic divisions—from pre-existence to history, or from incarnation to salvation.⁸⁵ However, as we have seen above, the prologue of the Fourth Gospel represents a progressive temporal unity.

⁸² A more nuanced translation might read: “¹At Creation was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²The Word was at Creation with God.”

⁸³ Luke T. Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 482.

⁸⁴ For example, one of the primary heterodox views that challenged the preexistence of the λόγος from the Fourth Gospel was Arianism. I believe my positional understanding of the preexistence of the λόγος is more effective against the Arian temporal approach to defining the λόγος, as reflected in Arius’ famous statement, as recorded by Socrates Scholasticus (c. AD 380–450): “there was once when he was not”; see Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, 1.5.2.

⁸⁵ Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 1:18–23; Godet, *Commentary*, 240–3; and Barnhart, *Good Wine*, 46–56.

While this does not preclude alternative temporalities,⁸⁶ the prologue as a whole proceeds from the point of creation to the testimony of John (1:19). For this reason, the cosmology of the prologue is quite simple: the Word was with God at creation (1:1–2), and from the time of creation the Word has come into the world (1:1) and even dwelt in the world for a time (1:14). Rather than a hypothetical hymn, the prologue is the intended and particular cosmological and temporal key to the Gospel.

In the first verse of the first chapter of the Gospel, the temporal marker ἐν ἀρχῇ bounds the narrative at the creation of the finite universe. This direct correlation to Genesis 1:1 sets the beginning moment and tone for the remainder of the prologue. In the remainder of the first phrase, “was the Word” (ἦν ὁ λόγος), as well as the following two phrases in the first verse, the verb ἦν has long proven to cause circumspection in the critical reader.⁸⁷ In contrast to more complex theories,⁸⁸ the simple imperfect tense ἦν is the simple and eloquent explanation of the position of the Word at creation: the Word *was* at creation. The Evangelist uses the simple past tense because of the narrative and temporal boundary that occurs; the creation is the starting point for the epic introduction to the story of the Word. The use of ἦν to directly equate the Word with God (ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν), and God with the Word (θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος), is used in the first phrase to equate the Word with his place at creation.⁸⁹

The Gospel continues the epic image of the Word launched into the world from creation in Jn 1:2. In fact, this verse reiterates and supports this premise. If the Evangelist had not desired to stress the relationship between the Word, God, and the beginning, this verse becomes entirely superfluous. After all, from a theological perspective, it would seem more natural to reiterate the equality of the Word with God. However, the Evangelist instead stresses the relationship between Word, God, and creation by again stating, “This one was at creation with God” (οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν). Again, the simple imperfect ἦν places the Word at the creation of the universe, in order to position the Word to

⁸⁶ We will consider certain alternative temporalities starting in Chapter 6.

⁸⁷ Kermode, “John,” 443.

⁸⁸ For example, Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 31–5; and Keener, *Gospel of John*, 1:369.

⁸⁹ This direct equation does not conflate their identities; cf. Herman C. Waetjen, “Logos πρὸς τὸν θεόν and the Objectification of Truth in the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel,” *CBQ* 63:2 (2001): 269.

be sent from God,⁹⁰ and enter into the universe that He created. This verse also serves to link the opening verse with the verse describing that which is created in Jn 1:3.

While many commentators argue that the third verse introduces a new concept, namely creation,⁹¹ the most natural reading occurs when creation is the theme throughout. Clearly, the discussion of creation in Jn 1:3 follows directly from the first two verses. In fact, the third verse explains and amplifies the position and role of the Word at creation. According to the Evangelist, “the entire universe” (literally ‘everything’) (πάντα) was created through the Word (δι’ αὐτοῦ).⁹² What is more, the narrative restates the reverse of this claim by stating that without the Word (χωρὶς αὐτοῦ), nothing was created. Whether as a positive or negative affirmation, the position of the Word at creation is distinctive.⁹³ In fact, without the correlation between the first three verses, one could more easily liken the creative acts in Jn 1:3 to the role of a demiurge or a Gnostic limited creation.⁹⁴ In the end, the Gospel underscores the creative function of the Word by employing the verb “became” (ἐγένετο) instead of the previous ἦν.⁹⁵ Rather than selecting the mundane verb for “create” (κτίζω), the Evangelist invokes the epic of creation by declaring that the universe simply ἐγένετο—reflecting the אֶרֶץ of God (Gen 1:1)—and is not open to extended philosophical contemplation. Thus, the dramatic and epic style takes precedent over the philosophical and theological content of the prologue.

The creation theme in the prologue of the Fourth Gospel follows the reader into the remaining verses. At creation, the Word is the source of life for His creation (ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν).⁹⁶ Indeed, life is equated (ἦν) with the Word (11:25, 14:6), is produced at creation (Gen 1:11–2, 20–31),

⁹⁰ For example, see Jn 3:31, 6:33, 38, 41–2, 50–1, 58, 11:27, 13:3, 16:5, 27–8, 17:8.

⁹¹ For example, see Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 1:25; Haenchen, *John*, 1:112; Lightfoot, *St. John's Gospel*, 78; Grayston, *Gospel of John*, 4–7; and Demetrius R. Dumm, *A Mystical Portrait of Jesus: New Perspectives on John's Gospel* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2001), 163.

⁹² Cf. Paroschi, *Incarnation and Covenant*, 27.

⁹³ See Prov 8:22–3; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:15; Heb 1:2; and cf. Sir 24:9.

⁹⁴ Cf. Pagels, *Johannine Gospel*, 31–5, 47; and Keener, *Gospel of John*, 1:375.

⁹⁵ Cf. Barrett, *Gospel According to St. John*, 127; and contra Collins, *These Things*, 206.

⁹⁶ What is more, Rudolf Bultmann argues that in this sense, life “is not vitality itself, but the *power* that *creates* this vitality [emphases mine]”; see Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 39.

and is the light to humanity (ἡ ζωὴ ἥν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων) (1:4). The life that is light which shines in the darkness is a clear continuation of the creation theme (Gen 1:2–4).⁹⁷ At this point in the prologue, the Evangelist offers a testimony from John the Baptist (1:6–9); this testimony is that the light that was at creation is now coming into the universe (ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον). Furthermore, when the Word enters into the universe and is not recognized, the prologue reminds the reader that this was the same Word that was at creation (ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο) (1:10, cf. 1:3). From this point, the prologue moves past the apex of the gradual shift from the moment of creation to the story at hand, and proceeds toward the introduction of Jesus. The Word became flesh and dwelt with his creation (1:14); the Baptist has testified to this (1:15–8). The prologue concludes the dramatic voice-over with an evolution from a world of epic to a world of witness (see Section 7.3.).⁹⁸

3.2. THE END OF TIME

Narrative beginnings and endings have much more in common than merely serving as the boundary points of texts. Both have received more criticism than praise, yet both are narrative necessities. Aside from the beginning, the ending of a narrative may be its most important element, though there remains little agreement about the nature and function of this narrative facet. Endings are a basic component of narrative structure and thus are critical to grasping the value of any given text.⁹⁹ In *Poetics*, Aristotle defines an ending as “that which does itself naturally follow from something else either necessarily or in general, but there is nothing else after it.”¹⁰⁰ In a narrative universe of finite time, Aristotle’s definition is quite correct.

The beginning and ending of a text serve as the frame that distinguishes the narrative from the external world.¹⁰¹ Moreover, a narrative

⁹⁷ On this there is little dispute; see Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 1:26; Barrett, *Gospel According to St. John*, 131; Carmichael, *Story of Creation*, 32; and Hooker, *Beginnings*, 68.

⁹⁸ Hooker, *Beginnings*, 65; and contra Kermode, “John,” 448.

⁹⁹ The ending of a text is often the strongest gauge of genre; see David H. Richter, *Fable’s End: Completeness and Closure in Rhetorical Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1974), 10.

¹⁰⁰ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 6.

¹⁰¹ Mikeal C. Parsons, “Reading a Beginning/Beginning a Reading: Tracing Literary Theory on Narrative Openings,” *Semeia* 52 (1990): 14.

(*sjuzhet*) must come to a close, unlike the seeming vastness of the world (*fabula*) from which it is culled; it cannot continue indefinitely, and even more than a beginning, an ending can often feel contrived to the reader.¹⁰² In contrast to temporal beginnings, the final temporal conditions of the ending affect not only the reader but also the world outside of the texts, as the reader leaves the textual world and re-enters another. However, while we may be able to identify boundaries easily, the nature of narrative endings remain inevitably complex, so that Aristotle's "nothing else" may be more uncertain than expected.¹⁰³

More than just a place to stop, narrative endings are particular moments that are relative to the beginning and middle of a narrative.¹⁰⁴ Narrative conclusions are also different from any random terminus because a true narrative ending,¹⁰⁵ regardless of type or disposition, will bring a sense of coherence, stability, and completion to the text and the reader.¹⁰⁶ For many narratives, including William Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Herodotus' *History*, Isaiah, and the Gospel of Mark, completion and stability in the conclusion may appear severely lacking.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, textual conclusions are noteworthy in that the reader expects plots to be resolved, explanations to be found, and closure to be had.¹⁰⁸ As in the previous section, I will consider narrative endings from a functional

¹⁰² Carolyn Dewald, "Wanton Kings, Pickled Heroes, and Gnomish Founding Fathers: Strategies of Meaning at the End of Herodotus's *Histories*," in *Classical Closure: Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature* (ed. Deborah H. Roberts, Francis M. Dunn, and Don Fowler; Princeton: Princeton University, 1997), 63.

¹⁰³ Don P. Fowler, "First Thoughts on Closure: Problems and Prospects," *Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici* 22 (1989): 78.

¹⁰⁴ June Schlueter, *Dramatic Closure: Reading the End* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University, 1995), 23.

¹⁰⁵ When relating to narrative structure, I will use the terms 'ending' and 'conclusion' synonymously within this work.

¹⁰⁶ Though experiential texts may strive for false endings or closure; see Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1968), 2.

¹⁰⁷ For example, critics deemed the conclusion to *King Lear* so horrific that the theatrical version was performed with a redacted ending for more than 150 years after its original creation.

¹⁰⁸ Peter Rabinowitz argues that readers naturally utilize a special interpretative process when they encounter endings; further, Marianna Torgovnick writes that "an ending is the single place where an author most pressingly desires to make his points—whether those points are aesthetic, moral, social, political, epistemological, or even the determination not to make any point at all"; see Peter Rabinowitz, "Reading Beginnings and Endings," in *Narrative Dynamics: Essays on Time, Plot, Closure, and Frames* (ed. Brian Richardson; Columbus: OSU, 2002), 304; and Marianna Torgovnick, *Closure in the Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1981), 19.

more than an ontological perspective in order to distill the temporality of closure from narratives such as the Fourth Gospel.

While the temporality of a text is bounded by its ending, there are nonetheless innate tensions between completion and incompleteness that exist at the conclusion of all texts. Because narratives have clear (external) beginnings and endings, time and text are often felt by the reader to be trustworthy; however, excessive ambiguity at the end of a narrative can disturb that trust to some degree.¹⁰⁹ The primary ambiguity that exists in narrative endings is the friction felt between aperture and closure, or from a slightly different perspective, the degree of closure. Contrary to certain arguments,¹¹⁰ narratives can enjoy true closure—though many intentionally seek aperture or ambiguity over closure. Further, some endings may seem to be more of a beginning than an ending, or may in fact be the springboard for a new beginning.¹¹¹ This tension has spilled over into the interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, where the majority opinion ascribes an unrealistic expectation to the closure of the narrative.

3.2.1. *The Temporal Function of Closure*

If a narrative *conclusion* represents the spatial end of a text, then *closure* represents the temporal end.¹¹² Whereas the conclusion is tangible and self-evident, closure is ethereal and intrinsic to the text.¹¹³ Marianna Torgovnick defines ‘closure’ as “the process by which a novel reaches an adequate and appropriate conclusion.”¹¹⁴ Therefore, unlike the conclusion or the climax of a narrative, closure is a movement in time that a text undergoes and a reader experiences in the course of reading. “Closure generally indicates a sense of completeness, integrity and coherence, both formal and thematic, that the reader experiences at the

¹⁰⁹ Though there is dissent as to the degree; see Kort, *Modern Fiction and Human Time*, 178.

¹¹⁰ Deconstructionists seek to unravel the edges of texts; for a critique, see Torgovnick, *Closure in the Novel*, 4; and Carroll, “Diachrony,” 823.

¹¹¹ Miller, “The Problematic of Ending in Narrative,” 6; and Schlueter, *Dramatic Closure*, 21.

¹¹² This is a loose analogy; a conclusion certainly has a strong temporal dimension, and a reasonable case has been made that closure is not solely temporal; see Smith, *Poetic Closure*, 2.

¹¹³ Schlueter, *Dramatic Closure*, 43.

¹¹⁴ Torgovnick, *Closure in the Novel*, 6.

end of the work.”¹¹⁵ Thus, while the conclusion is absolute and static, closure has a dynamic quality that relates to the reader.

The ambiguity over closure involves the degree of closure felt by a reader of a given text. Traditionally, it is thought that a reader has an innate, psychological need to see the whole text, to experience closure in a way that is deemed satisfying.¹¹⁶ When the degree of closure in a text is limited, we can consider the text to be ‘open,’ and discussion may ensue about aperture rather than closure.¹¹⁷ Because of aperture and the psychology of closure, skeptics have described closure as a ‘make-believe’ process,¹¹⁸ or out-right denied.¹¹⁹ At the same time, it is not difficult to find a narrative ending with near total closure: “And they all lived happily ever after.” As a whole, most narrative conclusions have a modest to moderate amount of closure, though cultural context, age, theme, and genre play a large part in determining the degree of closure.¹²⁰ Finally, just because a text (or more precisely, a text and a reader) does not possess a high degree of closure, does *not* mean it suffers from a lack of a conclusion (and vice versa).¹²¹

Because closure is a temporal process that begins in the text, and continues in and with the reader, it enjoys a certain amount of dynamic relativity in comparison to a narrative ending. Similar to a conclusion, closure functions to fence the narrative into a finite world and helps give it distinct boundaries.¹²² Closure in historiographical narratives can appear artificial relative to the degree of closure found in the actual concluding event.¹²³ At the same time, a biography frequently (and perhaps rightfully) displays a high degree of closure, as it has a

¹¹⁵ Fusillo, “How Novels End,” 210.

¹¹⁶ Schlueter, *Dramatic Closure*, 36.

¹¹⁷ Don Fowler notes that a text “which leaves questions unanswered will be ‘open’ to different interpretations, and may leave the reader feeling that where the work stops is not really The End”; see Fowler, “First Thoughts on Closure,” 78.

¹¹⁸ D. A. Miller, “Problems of Closure in the Traditional Novel,” in *Narrative Dynamics: Essays on Time, Plot, Closure, and Frames* (ed. Brian Richardson; Columbus: OSU, 2002), 275.

¹¹⁹ Russell Reising, “Loose Ends: Aesthetic Closure and Social Crisis,” in *Narrative Dynamics: Essays on Time, Plot, Closure, and Frames* (ed. Brian Richardson; Columbus: OSU, 2002), 321.

¹²⁰ Fusillo, “How Novels End,” 210.

¹²¹ Rabinowitz, “Reading Beginnings and Endings,” 308.

¹²² Thomas M. Greene, “The End of Discourse in Machiavelli’s ‘Prince,’” *YFS* 0:67 (1984): 60.

¹²³ Cf. Kalle Pihlainen, “Of Closure and Convention,” *RH* 6:2 (2002): 189.

natural ending: death.¹²⁴ Certain narrative conventions induce closure:¹²⁵ primary inducers include death, marriage, coronation, and intrusion by the narrator; secondary inducers include old age, sale of lands, seasonal changes, departures, or the end of journeys.¹²⁶ Three other narrative features that can be used to induce closure are the relationships between the implied author/implied reader/real reader,¹²⁷ repetition,¹²⁸ and characterization.¹²⁹ Beyond this, ancient narratives employed other devices such as aftermaths and hyperboles that generally affected closure in one way or another.

Looking forward to the Fourth Gospel, there are numerous examples of narrative conclusions with various degrees of closure from the ancient world. A popular stereotype of ancient narrative endings is that they are simplistic, positive, and consolatory—perhaps the type of conclusion most derided by modern critics.¹³⁰ However, upon closer inspection, the endings to ancient works are anything but simple and uniform. While the conclusions of ancient narratives may not have as many experimental options as modern novels, they exhibit variety and a wide range of degrees of closure.¹³¹ In concluding *History*, Herodotus discards closure in order to build a sense of indeterminacy in the reader.¹³² In *The Ethiopian Tale*, Heliodorus (c. 3rd or 4th century AD) tries to block closure until the last possible narrative moment.¹³³ In contrast, Ovid's conclusions speak of brevity and anxiety due to the politics of Roman

¹²⁴ Christopher Pelling, "Is Death the End? Closure in Plutarch's *Lives*," in *Classical Closure: Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature* (ed. Deborah H. Roberts, Francis M. Dunn, and Don Fowler; Princeton: Princeton University, 1997), 228.

¹²⁵ Again, these conventions induce closure without regard to the genre of the narrative; however, the genre may affect the degree of closure for a given convention: for example, death will induce more closure in a biography than an epic.

¹²⁶ For examples, see Miller, "Closure," 272; and Pelling, "Death," 230.

¹²⁷ For a list of possible relationships see Torgovnick, *Closure in the Novel*, 17–8.

¹²⁸ Smith, *Poetic Closure*, 27; and Pelling, "Death," 242.

¹²⁹ Schlueter, *Dramatic Closure*, 51.

¹³⁰ One of the most famous and outspoken was Henry James, who disdained 'traditional' endings as the "distribution at the last of prizes, pensions, husbands, wives, babies, millions, appended paragraphs, and cheerful remarks"; see Henry James, "The Art of Fiction," in *The Future of the Novel: Essays on the Art of Fiction* (ed. Leon Edel; New York: Vintage, 1956), 8.

¹³¹ Fusillo, "How Novels End," 226; Steve Nimis, "The Sense of Open-Endedness in the Ancient Novel," *Arethusa* 32:2 (1999): 217; and cf. J. R. Morgan, "A Sense of the Ending: The Conclusion of Heliodorus' *Aithiopika*," *TAPA* 119 (1989): 300.

¹³² Dewald, "Wanton Kings," 70.

¹³³ Morgan, "A Sense of the Ending," 318–9.

writing.¹³⁴ The book of Isaiah contains many moments of false closure only to conclude with an alarming degree of indeterminate aperture.¹³⁵ Finally, as with *King Lear*, there are multiple endings to both of the epics of Homer (c. 8th century BC), demonstrating that the conclusion was anything but simple (or, perhaps, agreed upon).¹³⁶

A common feature of ancient narrative endings that can appear one-dimensional to the modern reader is the *aftermath*: normally, a posthumous scene that occurs after the strongest closural device (the death of the main character) and reveals the future. However, such a device in the ending of the narrative is actually sophisticated in that a narrator may employ it either to induce closure or to tempt aperture—just as the reader has an innate desire for closure, there is also a natural need for aftermath.¹³⁷ Even Aristotle felt that a narrative normally needed more than a single life could offer.¹³⁸ In the ancient world, the *Lives* of Plutarch (c. AD 46–120) is perhaps the best example of a collection of narratives with proleptic conclusions. Plutarch's aftermaths are lengthy, especially in contrast to modern biographies.¹³⁹ Besides Plutarch's works, there are many Jewish, Greek, and Roman narratives¹⁴⁰ with aftermaths.¹⁴¹ Unrestrained by genre, the aftermath was a notable device that shaped narrative closure in the ancient world.

¹³⁴ Alessandro Barchiesi, "Endgames: Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 15 and *Fasti* 16," in *Classical Closure: Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature* (ed. Deborah H. Roberts, Francis M. Dunn, and Don Fowler; Princeton: Princeton University, 1997), 196.

¹³⁵ Cf. Ronald E. Clements, "Isaiah: A Book without an Ending?" *JSTOT* 97 (2002): 109–10.

¹³⁶ Philip Hardie, "Closure in Latin Epic," in *Classical Closure: Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature* (ed. Deborah H. Roberts, Francis M. Dunn, and Don Fowler; Princeton: Princeton University, 1997), 139.

¹³⁷ Deborah H. Roberts, "Afterword: Ending and Aftermath, Ancient and Modern," in *Classical Closure: Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature* (ed. Deborah H. Roberts, Francis M. Dunn, and Don Fowler; Princeton: Princeton University, 1997), 251–2.

¹³⁸ Cf. Aristotle, *Poetics*, 8.

¹³⁹ Christopher Pelling suggests that Plutarch devoted more than 4% of *Lives* to posthumous material, a large percentage by modern standards; see Pelling, "Death," 229–30.

¹⁴⁰ For example, Joshua, Ruth, Job, Jeremiah, Tobit, 3 Maccabees, the Testament of Job, and to a lesser degree, the conclusion to the Pentateuch as well as the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs; examples of non-posthumous aftermaths include Ruth (marriage) and Job (reinstatement); Greek and Roman examples include Chariton's *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, Xenophon of Ephesus' *Ephesiaca*, and Longus Sophistes' *Daphnis and Chloe*.

¹⁴¹ An extremely brief aftermath, or proleptic summary, is used, for example, in Joseph and Aseneth, Susanna, and the Testament of Dan; examples of works without aftermaths include Ezra, Judith, History of the Rechabites, and Jubilees.

Another device that often affected closure in ancient narratives was the *paratext*: an intrusion by the narrator in the form of a title, preface, epigram, or salutation. In ancient literature, the paratext was a part of the narration, and readers considered it as such.¹⁴² Paratexts placed at the end of early texts greatly contributed to closure, and served to validate the author's credentials or grant a historiographic authenticity.¹⁴³ Besides general paratexts,¹⁴⁴ ancient narrators commonly employed *explicit*s,¹⁴⁵ *testimoniums*,¹⁴⁶ *sphragides*,¹⁴⁷ hyperbole,¹⁴⁸ and perhaps the ultimate concluding paratext in Jewish narrative, the 'amen.' While not exhaustive, these samples display the variety of paratexts used to induce closure as well as the potential for colorful conclusions in ancient narratives.

All in all, ancient narratives as a whole typically exhibit a high degree of closure. However, this ancient affinity for closure is out of phase with modern criticism and culture: unlike ancient readers, contemporary readers are predisposed toward aperture and away from closure.¹⁴⁹ Even with works such as Euripides' (c. 484–406 BC) *Heracles*, an open narrative with a strong degree of *false* closure,¹⁵⁰ the closed ending simply seems tired to modern eyes, and an ancient narrative that ends with an *explicit*

¹⁴² Gérard Genette, *Seuils* (Paris: Seuil, 1987), 152–4.

¹⁴³ Fusillo, "How Novels End," 212.

¹⁴⁴ For example, the Testament of Isaac and the Testament of Jacob.

¹⁴⁵ An *explicit* occurs when the narrator states the narrative is at an end; for example, see 2 Maccabees, 2 Baruch, 1 Enoch, the Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah, the Testament of Adam, and the 11th Sibylline Oracle.

¹⁴⁶ A *testimonium* (sometimes referred to as an *incipit*) is used to affirm the narrator as witness; for example, see the 3rd Sibylline Oracle, the Apocalypse of Adam, the Testament of Job, the Testament of Solomon, Thomas the Contender 138.2, and to a certain degree 1 Enoch.

¹⁴⁷ A *sphragis*, or seal, is a device found primarily in poetry that validates the excellence of the poem; see Ian Rutherford, "Odes and Ends: Closure in Greek Lyric," in *Classical Closure: Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature* (ed. Deborah H. Roberts, Francis M. Dunn, and Don Fowler; Princeton: Princeton University, 1997), 46; and John Van Sickle, "Poetics of Opening and Closure in Meleager, Catullus and Gallus," *CW* 75:2 (1981): 65.

¹⁴⁸ For example, see Ecclesiastes, 1 Maccabees 9:22 (while not a conclusion, it grants closure and is a recognized example of hyperbole), and to a lesser degree, Esther, and the Lives of the Prophets.

¹⁴⁹ Pelling, "Death," 244; and Don Fowler, "Second Thoughts on Closure," in *Classical Closure: Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature* (ed. Deborah H. Roberts, Francis M. Dunn, and Don Fowler; Princeton: Princeton University, 1997), 5.

¹⁵⁰ Francis M. Dunn, "Ends and Means in Euripides' *Heracles*," in *Classical Closure: Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature* (ed. Deborah H. Roberts, Francis M. Dunn, and Don Fowler; Princeton: Princeton University, 1997), 109.

or similar device fares even worse. In fact, the dilemma is so severe that modern critics frequently ignore, dismember, or even alter the original endings of ancient texts.¹⁵¹ Privileging modern endings over ancient endings using modern criteria is simply incorrect.¹⁵² Furthermore, such populist editing reveals more about the presuppositions of the critic than the conclusion of the narrative.¹⁵³ Fortunately, while this attitude appears to be waning in certain disciplines in the wake of postmodern thought and an increasing interest in oral sources,¹⁵⁴ it still haunts Biblical critics and their understanding of closure.

3.2.2. *Temporal Closure in the Epilogue*

Similar to the debate over the prologue of the Fourth Gospel, critical debate has raged for centuries about the purpose and provenance of the ending of John. It is not unusual to discover several different 'true' endings for the Gospel in the monographs and commentaries. This is not unusual; as previously mentioned, many historical and literary critics have handled ancient (and even some medieval and modern) works of historiography and literature in the same manner. However, due to the power that endings possess to influence genre, reader comprehension, the frame of the *sjuzhet*, and narrative value, the ending of the Fourth Gospel is a more critical and necessary endeavor than often realized in Johannine studies, where critics frequently afford it merely footnote status.¹⁵⁵

The principal debate on the conclusion of the Fourth Gospel is over the authenticity of the final chapter, 21. A large number of scholars have argued for one reason or another that the final chapter is not authentic to the text and was added by a later redactor¹⁵⁶—and thus

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 90–1; Deborah H. Roberts, "Parting Words: Final Lines in Sophocles and Euripides," *CQ* 37:1 (1987): 51–53; and cf. Dewald, "Wanton Kings," 62.

¹⁵² Torgovnick, *Closure in the Novel*, 203; and Roberts, "Parting Words," 54.

¹⁵³ Dewald, "Wanton Kings," 76.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 77.

¹⁵⁵ Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 89.

¹⁵⁶ Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 700; Schnackenburg, *Gospel According to John*, 3:343; Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John* (ABRL; ed. Francis J. Moloney; New York: Doubleday, 2003), 223; Martin Hengel, *The Johannine Question* (London: SCM, 1989), 84; Maurice Casey, *Is John's Gospel True?* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 154; William Bonney, *Caused to Believe: The Doubting Thomas Story as the Climax of John's Christological Narrative* (BIS 62; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 171; W. Nicol, *The Sēmeia in the Fourth Gospel: Tradition and Redaction* (NovTSup 32; Leiden: Brill, 1972), 27–9; George Mlakuzhyil, *The Christocentric Literary Structure of the Fourth Gospel* (AnBib 117; Rome: EPIB, 1987),

look elsewhere for the true conclusion to the Gospel. However, a nearly equally large number of scholars have maintained the general authenticity of the final chapter, regardless of whether it was originally intended or added during a later edit by the Fourth Evangelist.¹⁵⁷ However, the current default setting in modern Biblical studies remains that the final chapter is inauthentic.¹⁵⁸ This attitude, if unfounded, is extremely problematic in light of the eminent responsibility that conclusions have in determining narrative genre, structure, and value.

Due to the importance of endings to narrativity, decisions to amend or alter a singular, received conclusion should be acutely circumspect. With the Fourth Gospel, editing the conclusion is problematic as there is no external evidence to support any alternative ending—the judgment to label the final chapter as inauthentic we can only call a “conjectural emendation” based on internal inferences.¹⁵⁹ These internal inferences are often stylistic in nature. We can bring this uncertainty more sharply into focus when we consider narrative endings in the ancient world: the Fourth Gospel by virtue of evidence is much more a *Kīng Lear* than ever it was a Homeric or early Roman epic.¹⁶⁰ For this reason, the burden of proof lies in the field of those who would discount the ending as received.¹⁶¹ Even textual critics who hold to the majority opinion admit that the voices affirming the authenticity of the final chapter are growing.¹⁶² In the end, we will see that the temporal function of closure

88; Collins, *These Things*, 153; Grayston, *Gospel of John*, 172; and Arthur H. Maynard, *Understanding the Gospel of John* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1991), 63.

¹⁵⁷ Brodie, *Gospel According to John*, 576; Witherington, *John's Wisdom*, 352; Hoskyns, *Fourth Gospel*, 550; Carson, *Gospel According to John*, 668; M.-J. Lagrange, *L'Évangile selon Saint Jean* (Paris: Gabalda, 1948), 520–1; Tovey, *Narrative Art*, 92; John W. Pryor, *John, Evangelist of the Covenant People: The Narrative and Themes of the Fourth Gospel* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1992), 92; Paul S. Minear, “The Original Functions of John 21,” *JBL* 102:1 (1983): 91; Peter F. Ellis, “The Authenticity of John 21,” *SVTQ* 36:1–2 (1992): 25; Richard Bauckham, “The Audience of the Fourth Gospel,” in *Jesus in Johannine Tradition* (ed. Robert T. Fortna and Tom Thatcher; Louisville: WJK, 2001), 111; W. S. Vorster, “The Growth and Making of John 21,” in *The Four Gospels 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck* (vol. 3; ed. F. Van Segbroeck and others; Louvain: Peeters, 1992), 2208.

¹⁵⁸ In contrast, Gunnar Østenstad derides this attitude as academic “dogma”; see Gunnar Østenstad, “The Structure of the Fourth Gospel: Can it be Defined Objectively?” *ST* 45:1 (1991): 35.

¹⁵⁹ David C. Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1997), 178; see also Andrew T. Lincoln, “The Beloved Disciple as Eyewitness and the Fourth Gospel as Witness,” *JNT* 85 (2002): 7.

¹⁶⁰ There are multiple endings to the Homeric texts, and possibly four of the seven 1st century BC/AD Roman epics are considered incomplete or redacted; see Hardie, “Closure in Latin Epic,” 139–40.

¹⁶¹ Keener, *Gospel of John*, 2:1221.

¹⁶² Brown, *Introduction*, 84.

found in the conclusion of the Fourth Gospel demonstrates the final chapter is in fact internally coherent and consistent.

In considering the critical canon, one of the main reasons for the confusion over the question of internal coherence of the final chapter arises from the variety of terminology used to describe narrative endings. Besides an epilogue, the 21st chapter has been classified as a postscript,¹⁶³ a supplement,¹⁶⁴ an appendix,¹⁶⁵ and an afterthought,¹⁶⁶ to name but a few. Many of these labels are pejorative, and say more about the critics' view of the narrativity of the Gospel than the structure of the Gospel itself. The best and most correct classification for the final chapter of the Fourth Gospel is, in fact, an *epilogue*—but this statement creates a quandary because the word 'epilogue' is so maligned, stretched and misused in Johannine circles as to make it almost meaningless.¹⁶⁷

Moving beyond simplistic definitions,¹⁶⁸ an *epilogue* has two key characteristics that distinguish it from other types of narrative conclusions: it offers some level of *Nachgeschichte*, or after-history, for the primary characters of the narrative and it undergoes a temporal shift from the preceding sections of the narrative.¹⁶⁹ Therefore, the notion of an epilogue does not address issues of authenticity or redaction as it is often made to do in Biblical studies. However, an epilogue is a function of temporality; it is the move from one temporal dimension to another within the narrative universe of the Fourth Gospel, while offering a proleptic overview of the characters of John, Jesus and Peter, that clearly identifies the final chapter as an epilogue.¹⁷⁰

The second and possibly greater misperception in Biblical studies is the handling of ideas such as *conclusion*, *climax* and *closure*. For example, it is not uncommon to see 'conclusion' used to describe either closure,

¹⁶³ Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 700.

¹⁶⁴ Benjamin W. Bacon, "The Motivation of John 21: 15–25," *JBL* 50 (1931): 71.

¹⁶⁵ Mlakuzhyil, *Christocentric*, 349.

¹⁶⁶ Ashton, *Studying John*, 144.

¹⁶⁷ Contra (classification), as well as for example (misuse), John Breck's study: I believe Breck's understanding of narrative classifications are completely accurate, but he falls into the trap of the denigration of the idea of 'epilogue' sometimes pejoratively used in Fourth Gospel studies; see John Breck, "John 21: Appendix, Epilogue or Conclusion?" *SVTQ* 36:1–2 (1992): 27–8.

¹⁶⁸ Indistinction plagues the 'epilogue' classification even outside of Biblical studies; see Torgovnick, *Closure in the Novel*, 12.

¹⁶⁹ Boris Eikhenbaum, "O'Henry and the Theory of the Short Story," in *Readings in Russian Poetics* (ed. Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorska; Cambridge: MIT, 1971), 232; and see also, Torgovnick, *Closure in the Novel*, 11.

¹⁷⁰ Torgovnick, *Closure in the Novel*, 15.

or the climax, or the edited ending of the critic.¹⁷¹ Because many critics make judgments about authenticity and narrativity solely on internal inferences, we must utilize a finer degree of precision in analyzing the ending of the Fourth Gospel. A *conclusion* is primarily a spatial designation for the end of a text: in the Fourth Gospel, the conclusion is 21:24–25, or in a larger sense, chapter 21, or even chapters 20–21 or 18–21, depending on how broad the designation. A *climax* is primarily a function of narrativity and plot; points of climax vary in magnitude throughout a narrative. For this study, 20:30–31 is the primary climax point within the end of the narrative.¹⁷² *Closure*, a temporal movement in the text experienced by the reader, also ebbs and flows along throughout the ending of the Gospel; notable points of closure include 19:35, 20:30–31, and 21:24–25.¹⁷³

We can build the case for the narrative consistency of the ending of the Fourth Gospel on two issues: the use of ancient closural devices and the temporal function of closure within the conclusion. While a few critics argue for inconsistency and inauthenticity from textual and grammatical data studies, most base their argument on stylistics in one form or another.¹⁷⁴ On the former issue, the closural devices employed by the Fourth Gospel are typical for ancient narratives but awkward and trite by modern standards. The conclusion of the Gospel contains an overly lengthy aftermath (in the form of an epilogue) in comparison to modern works.¹⁷⁵ Sprinkled throughout the ending are several paratexts, conventional in ancient works but *passé* in modernity.¹⁷⁶ Finally,

¹⁷¹ In the only previous detailed study of closure in the Fourth Gospel, Beverly Gaventa argues that John has dual endings; however, to this reader she appears trapped in the paradigm of the majority opinion and works backward to draw this conclusion; see Beverly Roberts Gaventa, "The Archive of Excess: John 21 and the Problem of Narrative Closure," in *Exploring the Gospel of John* (ed. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black; Louisville: WJK, 1996), 240–252.

¹⁷² For example, one could expand the conclusion, such as a broader view of chapters 18–21, and this would expand the number of climax points, and include the resurrection, which is greater in magnitude than 20:30–1.

¹⁷³ Brodie, *Gospel According to John*, 573–4.

¹⁷⁴ For example, Schnelle rejects the final chapter merely because it contains an "intensified ecclesiastical interest"; see Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology*, 14.

¹⁷⁵ Approximately 3.5% of the text is contained in the epilogue, very similar in percentage to Plutarch's *Lives*, but a percentage which feels lengthy in relation to modern biographies or historiographies; this is exacerbated by a dimensional shift signaled by the *μετὰ ταῦτα* in 21:1 and an almost synkrisis-like proleptic aftermath noting the twin fates of Peter and John; cf. Pelling, "Death," 228.

¹⁷⁶ Specifically, there are authorial *testimoniums* in 19:35, 20:31, and 21:24; further, the paratext of 20:30–1 functions in a manner similar to a *sphragis* in poetry and also

the Fourth Gospel does not use classic, formulaic devices such as a *deus ex machina* to bring closure to the narrative and a soothing sense of familiarity to modern readers.¹⁷⁷

The temporal function of closure in the text is to move the narrative (and the reader) past the final climax point(s) to the finite end of the narrative. As a whole, this movement in the Fourth Gospel is a tangential form of closure,¹⁷⁸ a mundane type of closure that when coupled with a lengthy aftermath will appear anticlimactic to a modern reader.¹⁷⁹ Nonetheless, the Fourth Gospel employs a special type of tangential aftermath that we may label an 'epic outlook.'¹⁸⁰ It is common to read historiographical narratives with epic overtones that in the conclusion temporally displaces the reader with a proleptic summary of main characters or themes, giving the narrative conclusion an 'another time, another place' feel.¹⁸¹

Finally, the primary reason that the conclusion to the Fourth Gospel is anticlimactic by modern standards involves its use of a type of false closure in the paratext of 20:30–31. Paratexts, such as 20:30–31, appear trite to a modern reader because they invoke a heavy-handed sense of closure, especially when coupled with a narratorial or authorial intrusion.¹⁸² The paratextual climax point at 20:30–31, followed immediately by a temporal shift in narrative dimension,¹⁸³ offers the reader a strong closural location.¹⁸⁴ However, this is a site of false

an *explicit* in prose, and the paratext of 21:24–5 contains a predictable hyperbole that functions as an additional *explicit*; contra critics who classify 20:30–1 as a *colophon*, a device that would be textually misplaced at 20:30–1 (essentially, it would need to be at 21:24–5) and is more of an editor's or publisher's device (again, an assertion lacking in manuscript evidence); see D. Moody Smith, *The Theology of the Gospel of John* (New Testament Theology; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1996), 44; also Mlakuzhyil, *Christocentric*, 89; and cf. 'colophon' in Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1990), 39–40. A great example of a colophon from the ancient world is the publication title of the Gospel of Thomas in Codex 2 of the Nag Hammadi Library; see Helmut Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development* (Philadelphia: TPI, 1990), 20.

¹⁷⁷ Contra Martin Hengel's view of *deus ex machina*; see Hengel, *Johannine Question*, 84.

¹⁷⁸ Torgovnick, *Closure in the Novel*, 14.

¹⁷⁹ Breck, "John 21," 32.

¹⁸⁰ Along a similar line, Brodie asserts this is a 'life gets back to normal' ending; see Brodie, *Gospel According to John*, 582.

¹⁸¹ See above for numerous examples from the ancient world; examples exist in every era.

¹⁸² Uspensky, *Poetics*, 147.

¹⁸³ See Chapter 4 below for more details.

¹⁸⁴ Contra Tovey, *Narrative Art*, 110.

closure, constructed to emphasize the aftermath that follows in chapter 21. In this way, the epilogue is a necessary component of the closural strategy of the Fourth Evangelist. Even though the Evangelist's use of ancient closural devices and false closure can appear stale to modern readers, staleness is not synonymous with inauthenticity or redaction: ancient writers like the Evangelist "were perfectly capable of composing their own anticlimactic epilogues without needing redactors to add such appendices for them."¹⁸⁵

This use of false closure has convinced many modern readers that the true end of the Fourth Gospel is 20:30–31, even without any external evidence.¹⁸⁶ This is simply not the case for two unmistakable reasons. First, any argument for 20:30–31 as the natural conclusion is trumped by not one but *two* additional paratexts that signal the end of the Gospel: 21:24–25 and the earlier 19:35. Any stylistic evidence applied to 20:30–31 can also be applied in the same way to 19:35 and/or 21:24–25, as each are authorial *testimoniums* possessing the same basic closural function. In fact, any reader familiar with the Fourth Gospel should not be surprised that the Evangelist uses the repetition of three *testimoniums* to perpetuate closure in the narrative.¹⁸⁷ Even more unusual is critics' use of other paratexts (notably 1 Macc 9:22) to argue that 20:30–31 is the true conclusion,¹⁸⁸ when these paratexts are *not* the true conclusion to their own narratives and are in fact devices that induce false closure! Second, the other unmistakable reason that the true end is not 20:30–31 is that other texts originating from the Johannine School have the same concluding characteristics as the Gospel: both 1 John and Revelation have anticlimactic endings with multiple paratextual climax points that invoke some degree of false closure.¹⁸⁹

Borrowing a famous phrase from Frank Kermode, it is possible to get a 'sense of an ending' for the Fourth Gospel, though not one that will satisfy many modern readers. The ending of the Gospel is neither

¹⁸⁵ Keener, *Gospel of John*, 2:1213.

¹⁸⁶ For example, Schnackenburg, *Gospel According to John*, 3:335; Jürgen Becker, *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (vol. 2; ÖTKNT 4; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1981), 632; Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 700; Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 2:1057; Haenchen, *John*, 2:212; Schnelle, *Evangelium*, 310; and Collins, *These Things*, 128.

¹⁸⁷ Repetition is a well-recognized hallmark of the Fourth Gospel; contra D. Moody Smith, *John* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 27; and cf. Tovey, *Narrative Art*, 85.

¹⁸⁸ For example, Mlakuzhyil, *Christocentric*, 88; and Schnelle, *Evangelium*, 310.

¹⁸⁹ See Ellis, "The Authenticity of John 21," 20; Keener, *Gospel of John*, 2:1221; and M. Eugene Boring, "Revelation 19–21: End without Closure," *PSBSup* 3 (1994): 65–6, respectively.

open, as experimental modern literature often is, nor closed in a classic way, as are many familiar forms of literature. Instead, the Gospel approaches its temporal and textual boundary with a vague closural movement, using intrusions by the narrator, departures, and repetition to induce closure; seemingly obtuse paratexts trip the reader into a false sense of closure that disperses heterogeneously into a lengthy, proleptic aftermath. In retrospect, it is completely understandable for a modern critic to desire to excise chapter 21; for comfortable and absolute resolution can then be obtained. Yet the authentic ending of the Fourth Gospel is relative to its situation, time, and outlook: there is hope for the future, but also a sense of wistful melancholy inscribed in the conclusion,¹⁹⁰ necessary for a narrative so epic in scope and so tragic in character.¹⁹¹

3.4. AFTERWORD: FINITE

The time of both text and world is a finite time; unlike the λόγος, creation and narrative are forever temporally bounded by a beginning and an end. The same is true of the Fourth Gospel, a narrative that opens at the point of creation and leaves the reader at the end with a new hope for the future of creation. In this chapter, we saw that many scholars base the philosophical foundation underpinning the majority interpretation of the ἐν ἀρχῇ marker in Jn 1:1 on an imprecise understanding of temporality. When we applied a corrected understanding of temporality to this foundation, it altered the interpretation so as to bring it back into contextual and referential synchronization. Further, we built the case for reading the conclusion of the Gospel in a manner befitting both the external and internal evidences, as well as its ancient narrative mores. We saw that when we applied the temporal function of closure in ancient narratives to the Johannine epilogue, the purpose, worth, and authenticity no longer come into question (unless a modern bias is assumed).

In this chapter, I emphasized the enormous consequentiality of the beginning and ending of a narrative based on numerous reasons including value, context, and meaning. At times, I believe Johannine studies have overlooked these consequences due to a predisposition in

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Witherington, *John's Wisdom*, 346.

¹⁹¹ Pelling, "Death," 236.

favor of redaction strategies that fail to recognize the text as a closed system. As with any closed system, participants in that system (as a reader of a text), can analyze and hypothesize about matters outside the system, but can never completely understand what is beyond the system from the inside.¹⁹² Inside the system, there is a human need for location, and the value of the beginning and end for contextual and temporal mooring becomes clear.¹⁹³ However, on a more concrete level, the beginning and ending can greatly affect the perception of that which is outside the system; for example, the conclusion speaks to the identity of the implied reader and the “historiographical credentials of the text.”¹⁹⁴ Hence, we can see plainly the need for continuing inquiry into the beginning and ending of the Fourth Gospel.

Aside from the Fourth Gospel, the re-examination of temporal pre-suppositions embedded in Biblical interpretation is a relatively unexplored area of research upon which much more light can be shed; this need not be limited to merely the beginning or ending of a narrative. Another further consideration is the correlation between closure and what it reveals about the nature of the implied narrator and implied author. An additional area for future study that was beyond the scope of this chapter is the relationship between temporality and intertextuality at the boundary points of texts. A final question we will take up in part in the next chapter explores the intratextual relationship between the beginning, ending, and middle temporal dimensions of the text.

¹⁹² Heller, “Cosmological Singularity,” 674.

¹⁹³ Kermode, *Sense*, 4.

¹⁹⁴ Watson, *Text and Truth*, 35.

CHAPTER FOUR

TIME IS DIMENSIONAL

Anyone would think that time did not count in there!

—Samwise Gamgee

4.1. PRE-MODERN TEMPORAL CONFIGURATIONS

One of the most serious and contentious debates throughout the history of Johannine scholarship has been over the structure of the Fourth Gospel. This debate has touched every area of Johannine research: it is a well-recognized fact that the structure of the Gospel “is not a secondary matter, to be dealt with summarily after treating the weighty issues of history and theology...it is integral to the question of content.”¹ Moreover, nothing seems more basic to the temporal mechanics of the Gospel than the structure of the Gospel itself. As theorists have long recognized, and I demonstrated in Section 1.2., time is the organizing principle of narrative. There appears to be little reason to doubt that one wishing to understand the structure of the Fourth Gospel—and from this the plot, the implied author and the implied reader—must turn first to the underlying temporal configuration of the narrative.

At this juncture, it may be helpful to recall several other previously demonstrated assertions that will underpin this section of the work. Beyond the assertion that time is the organizing principle of narrative, I demonstrated that narrative time is better understood using a paradigm of modern physics rather than an arbitrarily-selected experiential or philosophical paradigm (Section 2.2.1.), and that a modern physics paradigm for time best understands that time functions as a dimension as opposed to a line or other form (Section 2.1.5.2.). In addition, a dimensional approach to narrative time revealed that narrative time is unquestionably a *block universe*—a narrative timescape in absolute co-existence with its textual before (past), present, and after (future) (Section

¹ Brodie, *Gospel According to John*, 31.

2.2.1.2.). Finally, the Fourth Gospel is a historiographical narrative that is entangled with the stories it tells (Section 7.4.) and opens on a clear, temporal note: “In the beginning” (Ev ἀρχῆν) (Section 3.1.).

4.1.1. *The Problem of a Pre-Modern Configuration*

Readers of the Fourth Gospel have realized that there is something quite peculiar about the structure of the text since its inception. If the early church had produced only this one gospel, and it was therefore even more *sui generis*, it is likely that the peculiar structure of this gospel would have garnered less notice. However, the other three canonical Gospels, and perhaps as well as for the reverse reason the many more non-canonical ones, only serve to exacerbate the peculiarities inherent in the structure of the Fourth Gospel. Especially to the modern, informed reader of this Gospel, there seems something quite wrong with the temporality of John.² While there is broad recognition of the temporal conundrum, a clear solution has never presented itself. The goal of this chapter will be to present an original solution to this impasse that has plagued Johannine scholarship for centuries.

Perhaps no one reflects the sentiment of Johannine scholars better than R. Alan Culpepper, who writes, “As a construction, the gospel is magnificent but flawed...magnificent in its complexity, subtlety, and profundity, but oddly flawed in some of its transitions, sequences, movements.”³ The impasse lay within this paradox of a narrative that is at once both magnificent and flawed. Avoiding for a moment the potential for a dialectic of flawed magnificence, in this chapter we will focus on these flaws thought to dim the Fourth Gospel’s brilliance. Culpepper is accurate in his assessment of the apparent flaws in the Fourth Gospel—but what is significant is that all three of these Johannine defects, the ‘transitions,’ ‘sequences,’ and ‘movements,’ are strongly *temporal* in nature. For this reason, it is clear that since the alleged flaws in the Fourth Gospel are temporal in nature, the key to understanding these defects lies in the temporality of the Gospel text.

² James P. Martin, “History and Eschatology in the Lazarus Narrative,” *SJT* 17:3 (1964): 335.

³ Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 231; see also Urban C. von Wahlde, *The Earliest Version of John’s Gospel: Recovering the Gospel of Signs* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1989), 17f; and Wayne Meeks, “The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism,” *JBL* 91:1 (1972): 48.

In this history of Johannine scholarship, there has been an endless supply of creative solutions to these perceived flaws.⁴ We may categorize the majority of these creative solutions as one form or another of textual rearrangement. The first extant example of a rearrangement of the text of the Fourth Gospel came in the late 2nd century with the *Diatessaron* of the heterodox⁵ theologian Tatian (ca. AD 170). Another well-known example of early Johannine textual reorganization was the 3rd century AD Sinaitic Syriac version discovered in 1892.⁶ Most of these early attempts at rearrangement we should consider harmonizations: attempts to reconcile the Johannine narrative with the Synoptic Gospels, a practice common in the history of Gospel studies and continuing even today. As such, harmonizations are normally motivated by concerns other than an overt perception of flaws in the text. This is true of Tatian; his *Diatessaron* was an attempt to rearrange John to fit the Synoptic structure yet his incisions were not a precursor to modern higher criticism but were motivated more by external theological or apologetic concerns.⁷ Beyond harmonizations, another relatively common approach to the transitional aberrations in John is an allegorical or symbolic reading of the narrative.⁸

With the advent of higher Biblical criticism, the perception of serious structural defects in the Fourth Gospel grew. For this reason, scholars hypothesized that the text was displaced. This hypothesis maintains that for a variety of reasons, the text of the Fourth Gospel as it has been transmitted through the ages is displaced; or in other words, it is or has become arranged in a haphazard fashion. Again, critics most clearly see evidence for this in its transitions, sequences, and movements. Two of the most prominent large-scale examples are the position of chapters

⁴ I am using the term 'perceived' in this section for two reasons: first, there have been throughout the centuries those scholars and readers who have questioned or found potential answers to these perceived flaws, and second, we will demonstrate that many of the temporal flaws are in fact perceived by modern readers with implicit assumptions (Sections 4.2., 5, and 7.2.2.).

⁵ Robert M. Grant, "The Heresy of Tatian," *JTS* 5 (1954): 62–68.

⁶ Gary M. Burge, "The Literary Seams in the Fourth Gospel," *CovQ* 48:3 (1990): 16–7.

⁷ Benjamin W. Bacon, "Tatian's Rearrangement of the Fourth Gospel," *AJT* 4:4 (1900): 794; and Wilbert Francis Howard, *The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation* (4th ed.; rev. C. K. Barrett; London: Epworth, 1955), 111.

⁸ For a recent example, please see M. D. Goulder, "The Liturgical Origin of St. John's Gospel," in *SE* (vol. 7; ed. E. A. Livingstone; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1982), 205–21.

5 and 6 within the narrative and the position of the cleansing of the temple in contrast with the Synoptics (2:12–25; cf. Matt 21:12–17; Mark 11:15–19; Luke 19:45–48). Once seen as displaced, critics must then reorganize the text must to fit an assortment of conventions. Not only did Johannine scholars seek to rearrange displaced sections of the Fourth Gospel, many began to offer reasons for the displacement. For example, a number argued that the Fourth Evangelist was unskilled or unused to the Greek language,⁹ while still others postulated that the Evangelist was incompetent or senile.¹⁰

In 1902, H. J. Holtzmann published an influential article detailing the various theories of displacement,¹¹ and critics continued unabated to produce more theories in the early and mid 20th century.¹² Rudolf Bultmann, one of the most ardent supporters of the displacement hypothesis, proposed that the Gospel became disorganized in a later redactional phase, and then offered his own redaction of the text to correct perceived disarrangements.¹³ Theories of accidental displacement, often fueled by an Enlightenment-based hermeneutics of suspicion, have met with strong criticism in recent research.¹⁴ While very recent Johannine scholarship has largely shifted away from complex displacement theories to source- or literary-based compositional rearrangement,¹⁵ there still remains a consensus that the Gospel text is disjointed.¹⁶

⁹ Cf. Frank Thielman, “The Style of the Fourth Gospel and Ancient Literary Critical Concepts of Religious Discourse,” in *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy* (ed. Duane F. Watson; Sheffield: JSOT, 1991), 171.

¹⁰ Cf. Burge, “Literary Seams,” 22.

¹¹ H. J. Holtzmann, “Unordnungen und Umordnungen in vierten Evangelium,” *ZNW* 3 (1902): 50–60.

¹² For later examples, see F. R. Hoare, *The Original Order and Chapters of St. John's Gospel* (London: Burns Oates, 1944); and G. H. C. MacGregor and A. Q. Morton, *The Structure of the Fourth Gospel* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1961).

¹³ Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 10.

¹⁴ For example, see Mlakuzhyil, *Christocentric*, 8–13; or Peter F. Ellis, *The Genius of John: A Composition-Critical Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1984), 11–13.

¹⁵ For examples of recent works advocating displacement through sources, see Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology*, 84; Robert Tomson Fortna, *The Fourth Gospel and Its Predecessor: From Narrative Source to Present Gospel* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), 64; von Wahlde, *Earliest Version*, 26; and Burge, “Literary Seams,” 19, 22.

¹⁶ Besides Culpepper, Holtzmann, Bultmann, Fortna, von Wahlde, Burge, and Schnelle, other scholars who argue that the Fourth Gospel is disjointed—for whatever reason—in its final form include D. Moody Smith, *The Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel: Bultmann's Literary Theory* (New Haven: Yale University, 1965), 238–40; Haenchen, *John*, 1:46; Stephen S. Smalley, *John: Evangelist and Interpreter* (2nd ed.; Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1998), 98–100; Becker, *Evangelium*, 1:31–2; Staley, “Postmodern

The proposed solution to the large-scale disjointed nature of the Fourth Gospel rests with both the organization of the text as well as with the implicit assumptions of positivist critics. With regards to these two issues, Culpepper is again helpful in accurately summarizing the current consensus about the Fourth Gospel, in that the narrative “covers a period of about two and a half years in twenty-one chapters, since the narrative includes the testimony of John and the gathering of disciples before the first Passover and the appearances following the third Passover.”¹⁷ Herein is the rub. While there are in fact three mentions of a Passover in John (2:13, 23; 6:4; 11:55–13:1), as well as several incomplete references to hours, days, Sabbaths, and other festivals, it is nonetheless an implicit assumption that the Fourth Gospel is aligned with an absolute chronology (i.e. covers a period of 2½ to 3 or more years). While it is possible that the Fourth Gospel is arranged with an absolute chronology, it is equally possible that the Gospel was not arranged with an absolute chronology. As we will see, other chronological options do exist. The implicit assumption that the Gospel text possesses an absolute chronology runs throughout Johannine scholarship,¹⁸ and is the foundation for the questionable idea that the narrative is displaced or disjointed.¹⁹

Ultimately, this implicit assumption is incorrect. As a pre-modern Gospel writer, the Fourth Evangelist clearly understood a relatively linear chronology. Any casual reader of the Gospel will recognize that the narrative has some semblance of a beginning, middle and end system that is arranged using a relatively linear chronology. However, it

Approach,” 47; and A. Q. Morton and J. McLeman, *The Genesis of John* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew, 1980), 18–26.

¹⁷ Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 70.

¹⁸ For examples beyond those already given, see statements in Smith, *Theology*, 29; Mark W. G. Stibbe, *John's Gospel* (NTR; London: Routledge, 1994), 85; Reinhartz, *Word in the World*, 5; Gale A. Yee, *Jewish Feasts and the Gospel of John* (ZSNT; Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1989), 59–60; Margaret Davies, *Rhetoric and Reference in the Fourth Gospel* (JSNTSup 69; Sheffield: JSOT, 1997), 65; Birger Olsson, *Structure and Meaning in the Fourth Gospel: A Text-Linguistic Analysis of John 2:1–11 and 4:1–42* (ConBNT 6; Lund: Gleerup, 1974), 28; Frey, *Eschatologie II*, 168; Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology: Principles of Time Reckoning in the Ancient World and Problems of Chronology in the Bible* (rev. ed.; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998), 352–3; contra Casey, *True*, 25–7; and cf. Luther, *Luther's Works*, 22:218; and Bruce Chilton, *Redeeming Time: The Wisdom of Ancient Jewish and Christian Festal Calendars* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2002), 96.

¹⁹ J. Hillis Miller notes that this assumption is prevalent in Western interpretations of literature and history; see J. Hillis Miller, “Narrative and History,” *ELH* 41:3 (1974): 459.

is anachronistic to expect that the Fourth Evangelist would be able (or constrained) to construct his narrative account against an absolute time-frame as would a modern historian. The temporality of the narrative is therefore restricted to the pre-modern worldview and chronological understanding of the Evangelist. In this chapter, I will demonstrate that the Fourth Evangelist utilized a non-absolute chronology to organize the Fourth Gospel, thus bringing into question the perceived disjointed nature of the text.

This assumption of temporal absolutism exists due to the fact that modern scholars live in a world dominated by precise timekeeping and absolute chronologies. In such a modern world, a narrative containing three Passovers is almost always a three-year narrative; but this is not always the case for a pre-modern historiographer. The solution is not that the Fourth Evangelist was senile or deficient, but that the Evangelist as a pre-modern author consciously chose to avoid an absolute or strictly linear time structure in favor of a relative, dimensional temporal configuration.²⁰ Such a configuration may at first appear clumsy or disorganized to a modern reader, but it was an elementary and widely used brush among the pre-modern palette of narrative temporality. Finally, as an assumption of absolute chronology may be in many ways the last remnant of historical positivism, a researcher of the Fourth Gospel may find the temporality of the narrative to be subversive, even if it was not the original intent of the Evangelist. If true, it stands to subvert not only the temporal understanding of the modern reader but also attempts at Gospel harmonizations and positivistic anti-Johannine diatribes.²¹

4.1.2. *The Solution: Demonstrable in Anthropology*

In order to demonstrate that the Fourth Gospel is configured via a pre-modern temporality, the first line of evidence comes from anthropologi-

²⁰ It would be equally anachronistic to argue that the Fourth Evangelist used an actual dimensional temporal configuration for the Gospel narrative. However, the dimensional concept is a much closer approximation for a modern reader to understand various pre-modern temporalities that were used in ancient narratives than an absolute temporality, linear chronology, or other related terms such as 'episodic chronology.' While episodic and dimensional are somewhat similar in meaning in this context, dimensional is a far superior term in capturing the varied but often interwoven pre-modern temporalities; see also Section 2.2.1.2.

²¹ Such as Marvin Cain, *Jesus the Man: An Introduction for People at Home in the Modern World* (Santa Rosa: Polebridge, 1999), 6ff, 71ff.

cal research on the nature of time in various societies. In a previous section (Section 2.1.1.), I demonstrated that in almost every culture, the conventional paradigm for understanding time stays the same; in other words, most people in most every society can grasp a basic linear chronology (e.g., acorn—sapling—tree). At the same time, many pre-modern cultures will have secondary or unique chronologies that are also available to them as well. Ancient peoples rarely viewed time as an unbroken line; instead, they felt time to be episodic and discontinuous.²² Moreover, individuals of pre-modern cultures may not only have various notions of time available, they may consciously choose to utilize a unique paradigm for time for their narratives—or adapt that unique view of time to a basic, linear chronology.²³ This was the case with the pre-New Testament Hellenistic world. At the dawn of the Greek world, there was little recorded understanding or thought of time.²⁴ As provincial Greek society gave way to the Hellenistic world, there was not one official Hellenistic chronology, but several different types of chronologies used in Greek narrative.²⁵ For this reason, it is invalid and anachronistic to assume that the Fourth Evangelist only utilized an absolute or even a strictly-linear chronology. For these reasons, it was very possible that the Evangelist had access to other types of culturally-biased chronologies.

4.1.3. *The Solution: Demonstrable in Narratology*

A second line of evidence originates in the area of narrative theory and comes from an evaluation of generic expectations of the temporality of the Fourth Gospel. Having previously demonstrated that time is at the nucleus of the composition of narrative (Section 2.2.), the issue at hand becomes the nature of the time that is at the nucleus of narrative composition. Any reader of narrative will recognize that an author will

²² Lowenthal, *Past*, 198.

²³ This idea has personal relevance to the author; I have had the opportunity to spend time among various people groups in remote areas of East Africa. While many of the people I have encountered have been ‘modernized’ (really, chronologized) in the sense that some have calendars and a few (often broken) watches, their concept of time varies greatly from Western ideas. The concepts of ‘at the same time,’ and ‘5:00 p.m. sharp’ appear to be vague to many people I have encountered; while their worldview may include an absolute, Western chronology, it is not limited to only that chronology.

²⁴ Romilly, *Time in Greek Tragedy*, 3–4.

²⁵ Whitrow, *Time in History*, 48.

frequently shape plot, themes and characters, but said author also has the ability to shape the temporality of the narrative as well.²⁶ While Paul Ricoeur is correct in maintaining that the very nature of experienced time, coupled with the very nature of written narrative, tends to evoke a nominally linear temporal configuration,²⁷ there are in many cases events that may be too complex or too temporally-deviant to fit a strict linear or even absolute chronology, yet still be crucial to the essence of the narrative.²⁸ In many ways, it is the nature of narrative to bend and shape time as it sees fit,²⁹ and there is a long history of narratives written without an absolute chronology.³⁰

Furthermore, while modernistic ideals have tended to stress an absolute chronology as the conventional approach to narrative temporality,³¹ postmodernity has rebelled against this ideal. Theorist Paul de Man has attacked an absolute chronology as a callous temporal hierarchy³² and Martin Heidegger has criticized an absolute chronology on grounds of a professed, yet inauthentic, objectivity.³³ Moreover, literary critic Thomas Pavel has argued persuasively that an absolute chronology is actually impossible due to the inherent abstractions that occur at the deep levels of narrative.³⁴ Perhaps the best examples of the critique of absolute chronology are in the pages of postmodern literature. One of the most influential, Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*, eschews an absolute chronology, and in doing so affirms the dimensional nature of time.³⁵ Examples of numerous, recent narratives that reject or subvert an absolute chronology include Martin Amis's *Time's Arrow*, James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* and Richard Adams's *Watership Down*. In this way, postmodernity has demonstrated that there are other, perhaps better, temporal configurations than an absolute chronology.

²⁶ Cf. Petersen, *Literary Criticism*, 50.

²⁷ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 1:67.

²⁸ Ronen, "Paradigm Shift," 835; Dewar, "Where to Begin and How," 353; and see Chapter 6.

²⁹ Naddaff, *Arabesque*, 95.

³⁰ Sternberg, "Telling in Time (I)," 902.

³¹ Prince, "Narratology, Narrative, and Meaning," 544.

³² Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (2nd ed.; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1983), 164.

³³ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 443–4; and cf. E. M. Henning, "Destruction and Repetition: Heidegger's Philosophy of History," *JES* 12:4 (1982): 278.

³⁴ Thomas G. Pavel, *The Poetics of Plot: The Case of English Renaissance Drama* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1985), 33ff.

³⁵ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 2:151.

Yet the narrativity of the Fourth Gospel speaks to its potential temporal configuration as well. While the Gospel is not a postmodern gospel—with a temporally-subversive agenda—it is also not a modern gospel with an absolute chronological agenda, either. In point of fact, the Fourth Gospel is a pre-modern gospel; but this statement raises the question as to what type of chronology would be appropriate or expected for such a text. Different genres of narrative tend to determine—or at least attract—different types of narrative temporality.³⁶ To a modern reader, the Greek poet Homer is piquantly non-chronological,³⁷ while Pindar (518–after 446 bc) eschews a straightforward chronology.³⁸ In a modern detective novel, the genre alerts the reader to the probability of a strongly linear chronology.³⁹ Furthermore, medieval narratives such as *Le Morte d'Arthur* or the *Song of Roland* that do not conform to modern genres often confuse modern readers who assume there is an absolute chronology imposed upon these narratives.⁴⁰ Comprising both canonical and non-canonical narratives, the Gospel genre appears to be more episodic as opposed to linear in its overall narrative temporality. As the Gospel genre is typically based on a revelation-type plot,⁴¹ this is consistent with an episodic chronology. Therefore, it is normal to expect that the Fourth Gospel may have been consciously shaped with a specific—yet non-absolute—chronology in mind.

4.1.4. *The Solution: Demonstrable in Historiography*

The third line of demonstration that the Fourth Gospel is configured with a specific, yet non-absolute, chronology comes from Hellenistic historiographical evidence. Prior to investigating that evidence, an initial concern may arise regarding the Hellenistic milieu of the Fourth Gospel. In the 19th and early 20th century, the Fourth Gospel was regarded by Johannine scholarship as the product of a Hellenistic community, but in more recent times, there has been a shift toward the view that John

³⁶ George Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature* (trans. Anna Bostock; Cambridge: MIT, 1971), 122.

³⁷ Sternberg, *Expositional Modes*, 56; and cf. Maurizio Bettini, *Anthropology and Roman Culture: Kinship, Time, Images of the Soul* (trans. John Van Sickle; Baltimore: JHU, 1991), 136.

³⁸ Adolf Köhnken, "Mythical Chronology and Thematic Coherence in Pindar's Third Olympian Ode," *HSCP* 87 (1983): 49.

³⁹ Ermarth, *Sequel*, 19.

⁴⁰ Ermarth, *Realism*, 11.

⁴¹ Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 48.

is a predominantly Jewish Gospel.⁴² While this shift has been largely positive, there are times when it has been too reactionary; for example, Peder Borgen's claims that the only source the Fourth Evangelist has been proven to know is the Old Testament, appears to be somewhat of an overstatement.⁴³ Even this claim does not negate the fact that the Fourth Evangelist lived in the Hellenistic world, learned to write the Hellenistic language with some competency, and understood basic conventions of Hellenistic narrative. There is a clear trace of Greek contouring in the Fourth Gospel.⁴⁴ At the same time, I also do not presuppose that the Evangelist was fluent in Greek narrative strategy, a participant in historiographical tradition, or a frequent reader of Aristotle's *Poetics*; I presuppose only that the Evangelist understood very rudimentary Hellenistic narrative and/or historiographical conventions available to any literate individual.

Returning to the matter of historiography, one key differentiation between modern historiography and ancient historiography is temporality. Modern historians based the idea of modern history upon the idea of an absolute chronology: events that historians deem historical they plug into an absolute and precise timeline.⁴⁵ As such, a modern scholar who examines historical narratives from a pre-modern period will still perceive time in accordance with contemporary notions of temporality, even though the same modern scholar may still grapple with time as an organizing principle in his own research.⁴⁶ Thus, a modern historian tends to perceive time as absolute, and while this perspective defines the historian's view of history,⁴⁷ it can be consciously overcome. In fact, a historian must overcome it to best comprehend pre-modern

⁴² Keener, *Gospel of John*, 1:171; Köstenberger, *Encountering John*, 210–1; David D. C. Braine, "The Inner Jewishness of St. John's Gospel as the Clue to the Inner Jewishness of Jesus," *SNTSU* 13 (1988): 101–55; and cf. Adele Reinhartz, *Befriending the Beloved Disciple: A Jewish Reading of the Gospel of John* (New York: Continuum, 2001).

⁴³ Peder Borgen, "The Gospel of John and Hellenism: Some Observations," in *Exploring the Gospel of John* (ed. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black; Louisville: WJK, 1996), 100.

⁴⁴ Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 1:1vi.

⁴⁵ Elizabeth Ermarth states that modern history "claims universality for one kind of time: the neutral, infinitely receding, universal medium 'in' which everything exists, a kind of metaphysical ether that justifies mutually informative measurement between 'now' and 'then' over a vast range of comparison. 'History' is the inscription of that temporal medium"; see Ermarth, "Beyond History," 204; and also Patrick H. Hutton, "Mnemonic Schemes in the New History of Memory," *HT* 36:3 (1997): 381.

⁴⁶ Möller and Luraghi, "Time in the Writing of History," 15.

⁴⁷ Childs, *Myth*, 34.

historiography. Prior to the 17th century, historiographers did not have an absolute concept of time. Instead, they believed that there were multiple temporalities that could comprise a historical narrative—that there was not one correct historical temporality.⁴⁸ Clearly, there are various potential temporalities for the historiographer in any era.⁴⁹

Just as various people groups employ characteristic temporalities in their narratives (Section 2.1.1.), the Hellenistic world was no exception—it had its own sense of temporality. Unusual as it may seem to a Western reader, multiple temporalities, chronologies and notions of time found wide acceptance in the ancient Greek-speaking world.⁵⁰ For example, while the Greek populace may have reckoned time via the favored monarch of the hour, the Greek historian generally did not.⁵¹ While some historiographers may have aligned their calendar and temporality to the Trojan era, or to the Olympiad, neither was used frequently.⁵² In most instances, Greek historians connected their narratives to the narratives of their predecessors, and built a temporality from within their narrative that often betrayed a relativistic or episodic character.⁵³ An examination of specific pre-modern historiographers will reveal temporalities common in Greek narration—including the Fourth Gospel.

The Hellenistic narrative world gave birth to several various temporalities, none of which were absolute.⁵⁴ Historian Donald Wilcox writes, “The historians who dominated Western historiography from Herodotus to Guicciardini approached their subjects without assuming either an absolute time line or an absolute subject.”⁵⁵ Pre-modern

⁴⁸ Wilcox, *Measure of Times Past*, 12, 52.

⁴⁹ For simplification, I am merely differentiating between these two general extremes; readers will recognize that there are well known examples of medieval historiography (that is in many respects a bridge between ancient and modern) that offer distinct temporalities, as well as annals and chronicles and other forms of historiography.

⁵⁰ Court, *Reading the New Testament*, 11; and cf. Andrew M. Riggsby, “Pliny in Space (and Time),” *Arethusa* 36:2 (2003): 177–8; and Bruno Gentili and Giovanni Cerri, *History and Biography in Ancient Thought* (LSCP 20; Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1988), 42–54.

⁵¹ Möller and Luraghi, “Time in the Writing of History,” 13; and Mary E. White, “Herodotus’ Starting-Point,” *Phoenix* 23:1 (1969): 40.

⁵² M. I. Finley, “Myth, Memory, and History,” *HT* 4:3 (1965): 294.

⁵³ Möller and Luraghi, “Time in the Writing of History,” 7–8.

⁵⁴ Another implicit assumption that has been somewhat pervasive in theological circles during early parts of the 20th century is the notion that Greek and Jewish temporalities in antiquity were neatly divided into cyclical and linear temporalities, respectively; fortunately, this incorrect idea has mostly vanished; see Section 2.1.2.; and Momigliano, “Time in Ancient Historiography,” 7.

⁵⁵ Wilcox, *Measure of Times Past*, 50.

historians in general rejected the idea that every event had a simple location, especially in the pre-Fourth Gospel Hellenistic world. Herodotus (c. 484–420 BC), the ‘Father of History,’ wrote with a grand temporal miscellany in his narratives.⁵⁶ It is clear from his writings that while he understood conventional linearity, he chose not to use it in many instances.⁵⁷ Furthermore, when Herodotus did select a linear temporality, it was often mixed with a notably dimensional chronology;⁵⁸ one without absolute or linear temporal synchronisms linking his narrated events.⁵⁹ A primary reason for this is that Herodotus selected events for non-chronological reasons; he chose events that were significant to his historical narration rather than trying to fit a certain number of events to an absolute (or even conventional) timeline.⁶⁰ Knowledge of these events often came from independent traditions, and “instead of cutting into pieces the traditions he collected in order to create a continuous narrative arranged according to chronology, Herodotus uses extensively flashbacks and digressions to keep together the different focuses of his interest.”⁶¹

In many ways, Thucydides (c. 460–c. 404 BC) was very similar and yet very different from Herodotus in the temporality of his texts. Thucydides selected events for his historical writings based less on chronology than the causal or thematic significance of the event. While Thucydides’ works employ a variety of temporalities, he clearly understood linear chronology well enough to recognize that he could erect time as an independent structure in which to organize events.⁶² His history of war temporality was by and large linear. However, he did not choose to use merely a linear chronology throughout; Thucydides saw in the past both progress and regress, repetition and discontinuity, ideas less

⁵⁶ Starr, “Historical and Philosophical Time,” 27.

⁵⁷ Egbert J. Bakker, “Foregrounding and Indirect Discourse: Temporal Subclauses in a Herodotean Short Story,” *JPr* 16:3 (1991): 240.

⁵⁸ Wilcox, *Measure of Times Past*, 53; and White, “Herodotus’ Starting-Point,” 42–3.

⁵⁹ Möller and Luraghi, “Time in the Writing of History,” 12.

⁶⁰ Momigliano, “Time in Ancient Historiography,” 15; and cf. N. G. L. Hammond, “Studies in Greek Chronology of the Sixth and Fifth Centuries B.C.,” *Historia* 4 (1955): 390–2.

⁶¹ Möller and Luraghi, “Time in the Writing of History,” 12.

⁶² *Ibid.*

suiting for linearity⁶³ than a cyclical and/or dimensional temporality.⁶⁴ His use of a dimensional temporality allowed him to enunciate truly the causal and thematic essence of the events he narrated.⁶⁵

Following Thucydides, many other pre-modern historiographers treated time with various non-absolute chronologies. Among those were Polybius (c. 200–c. 118 BC), a highly regarded historiographer⁶⁶ who consciously altered linear temporalities in order to bring out the bigger picture in his historical narratives, and Pompeius Trogus (c. late 1st century BC), who wrote with a dimensional chronology during the reign of Caesar Augustus.⁶⁷ In addition, the 1st century Roman writers, Livy (c. 59 BC–AD 17) and Tacitus (c. AD 54–c. 120), constructed narratives that often temporally transcended the simple linear chronologies available to historians by this time in history.⁶⁸ While interest and accuracy in a strictly linear chronology grew during the Middle Ages, many medieval historiographers followed in the dimensional temporal

⁶³ Virginia Hunter, *Past and Process in Herodotus and Thucydides* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1982), 167; and cf. Robert Drews, "Ephorus and History Written κατὰ γένος," *AJP* 84:3 (1963): 245–6.

⁶⁴ Contra Clifford Brown, whose article is a recent example of a work that independently upholds a linear (perhaps absolute) temporality for Thucydides. Brown's thesis is that Thucydides is much like the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), in that Thucydides' historiography reveals a linear causality akin to Hobbes. Brown argues that this linear causality is therefore apparent in Thucydides' use of linear temporality, et al. However, I would argue that Brown has confused teleology and temporality, in that a narrative may be causally linear *without necessarily being* temporally linear—even though Thucydides is surely linear at times; see Clifford W. Brown, Jr., "Thucydides, Hobbes and the Linear Causal Perspective," *HPT* 10:2 (1989): 231.

⁶⁵ According to Wilcox, Herodotus, and especially, Thucydides, regularly used an episodic temporality "where the events had a temporal dimension but where the chronological order of specific events within an episode had no particular meaning and where one event in the episode could not be treated as the efficient cause of another. Episodic time was discontinuous, emphasizing process rather than progressive building of events one on another." Thucydides and Herodotus often mixed linear and episodic time together, as "a single absolute chronology could not express accurately these two elements of time. The Greeks needed other means; their techniques may seem primitive to us, since they cannot be easily used to create a linear series of simply located events, but in fact they conveyed temporal dimensions which our commitment to an absolute time line makes hard to express in modern historiography"; see Wilcox, *Measure of Times Past*, 53.

⁶⁶ Tenney Frank, "Roman Historiography before Caesar," *AHR* 32:2 (1927): 239.

⁶⁷ Wilcox, *Measure of Times Past*, 109; cf. the work of Chester Starr, who argues that Trogus was the one Greek historian in the ancient world using a clearly cyclical time structure throughout (though still non-absolute); see Starr, "Historical and Philosophical Time," 27.

⁶⁸ Wilcox, *Measure of Times Past*, 91, 104.

traditions of the ancient Greek and Roman historiographers.⁶⁹ In the 6th century AD, Procopius (c. early 6th century) and Agathias (c. 532–c. 580) constructed their historical narratives with a non-absolute dimensional chronology; Procopius's work *History of the Wars* was strongly reminiscent of Thucydides.⁷⁰

As the centuries wore on, late medieval historiographers such as Michael Psellus (c. 1019–c. 1078), Niketas Choniates (c. mid-12th century–c. 1212),⁷¹ and Otto of Freising (c. 1114/5–c. 1158) continued to produce historical narratives that were aligned with a dimensional chronology.⁷² It was not until the Renaissance that an absolute time began to dominate historical narratives. Even then, writers such as Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) still wrote in a manner similar to Thucydides and Tacitus.⁷³ Further, there is little agreement in contemporary research literature as to the origin of a widely-accepted absolute historical chronology; many regard Joseph Scaliger (1540–1609) as the first modern, chronologically-absolute historian.⁷⁴ Indeed, even Isaac Newton, the father of absolute scientific time, did not always use an absolute temporality, selecting instead pre-modern chronologies at various places in his narratives.⁷⁵

As the rise of the Enlightenment project dominated Western intellectual thought, 'modern history' was born with this ontologically absolute temporality.⁷⁶ In the same way, the recent rise of postmodernity has

⁶⁹ Sverre Bagge, "Medieval and Renaissance Historiography: Break or Continuity?" *EL* 2:8 (1997): 1366; Wilcox also adds that "an absolute, linear chronology, though developed to new levels of complexity and comprehensiveness by mathematicians and chroniclers from Eratosthenes to Eusebius, remained in the eyes of most practicing historians an artificial device, not entirely suitable for telling a story in its totality"; Wilcox, *Measure of Times Past*, 117.

⁷⁰ Möller and Luraghi, "Time in the Writing of History," 9–10.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁷² Wilcox, *Measure of Times Past*, 147; see also Sverre Bagge, "Ideas and Narrative in Otto of Freising's *Gesta Frederici*," *JMH* 22:4 (1996): 346–7, 375ff.

⁷³ Starr, "Historical and Philosophical Time," 27.

⁷⁴ David Murphy, "Space, Time, and Space Time," *Nebraska History* 80:3 (1999): 133.

⁷⁵ Kenneth J. Knoespel, "Newton in the School of Time: The *Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended* and the Crisis of Seventeenth-Century Historiography," *TEC* 30:3 (1989): 36.

⁷⁶ For example, Ermarth writes that for modern historical narratives "temporal neutrality acts in narrative just as spatial neutrality does in painting: as a common-denominator medium, infinite and unconfigured, containing all culture, all theory, all physical events... While the neutral time of history only became fully deployed and disseminated in nineteenth-century narrative, it had already been codified by seventeenth century empirical science, politics, and philosophy"; see Ermarth, "Beyond History," 202–3.

challenged narrative theorists and historians alike who use positivistic, Cartesian approaches to historiography—including the use of an absolute temporality. A watershed event in this transition was the work of Fernand Braudel and the *Annales* school, postmodern pioneers in the study of the temporal relativity of history.⁷⁷ For these reasons, there is a growing move to recognize, augment or replace absolute chronologies with alternative temporalities or hybrid absolute/dimensional chronologies within historiographical narratives.⁷⁸

One final piece of strong, anecdotal evidence we can add to the argument that the Evangelist used a dimensional chronology in a manner not unlike Greek historiographers in the configuration of the Fourth Gospel. Thucydides, along with several other ancient authors such as Philo (c. 30 BC–AD 50) and Clement of Alexandria (c. AD 150–211), purposefully constructed their texts for advanced readers⁷⁹—a style that obscures the narrative for the neophyte. To anyone familiar with the history of the Fourth Gospel, this should not be surprising: in the 2nd century, Clement described the Gospel as different—a “spiritual Gospel.”⁸⁰ The text is clearly a “book for insiders.”⁸¹ In a very similar way, Dionysius of Halicarnassus criticizes Thucydides’ works in light of those by Herodotus:

Thucydides keeps close to the chronological order, Herodotus to the natural grouping of events. Thucydides is found to be obscure and hard to follow. As naturally many events occur in different places in the course of the summer and winter, [Thucydides] leaves half-finished his account of one set of affairs and takes other events in hand. Naturally we are puzzled... The general result is that whereas Thucydides takes a single subject and divides one whole into many members, Herodotus has chosen a number of subjects which are in no way alike, and has produced one harmonious whole.⁸²

⁷⁷ For example, see Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Phillip II* (vol. 2; trans. Siân Reynolds; New York: Harper and Row, 1972).

⁷⁸ For example, Chaudhuri, “Undivided Time,” 26; see also John R. Hall, “The Time of History and the History of Times,” *HT* 19:2 (1980): 117.

⁷⁹ Thielman, “Style,” 180–1; see also Adam Parry, “Thucydides’ Use of Abstract Language,” *IFS* 0:45 (1970): 17; and White, “Herodotus’ Starting-Point,” 41.

⁸⁰ The famous quote by Clement: “John, last of all, aware that the outward facts were revealed by the Gospels, was encouraged by his pupils and divinely inspired by the Spirit to fashion a spiritual Gospel”; see Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 6.14.

⁸¹ Meeks, “Man from Heaven,” 70; and cf. the Gospel’s story-stealing descriptor for Judas in Tom Thatcher, “A New Look at Asides in the Fourth Gospel,” *BSac* 151:4 (1994): 431.

⁸² Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *On Thucydides*, 6–9.

While the research of Frank Thielman is compelling in drawing parallels between the obscurity of Thucydides and the Fourth Evangelist, it becomes clear upon further inspection that even more compelling is that the nature of the obscurity is rooted in temporality. In many ways, Dionysius' frustration over Thucydides' use of dimensional temporality echoes the frustration felt by many modern scholars in understanding the non-absolute chronology of the Fourth Gospel.

4.1.5. *The Solution: Demonstrable in Biblical Studies*

The final line of demonstration that the Fourth Evangelist utilized a non-absolute chronology comes from the study of the Fourth Gospel and other Biblical works. While it is an original intent of our study to demonstrate that the Evangelist organized the Gospel narrative with a dimensional chronology, there are nonetheless several proofs within Biblical studies that support this theory. First, when one turns to the pages of the Fourth Gospel, there is no physical evidence to support the displacement hypothesis, and "there is absolutely no evidence in any of the textual witnesses for any other order than that which we now possess."⁸³ Beyond this, there is widespread and growing support for the idea that the Fourth Gospel is arranged in a coherent, intentional manner—albeit at times complex or mystifying.⁸⁴ One very clear sign of textual unity and cohesion is the Evangelist's skilled use of cross-references and anachronies,⁸⁵ a significant temporal mechanic that we will treat later in this work (Section 5.2.3.). In light of this, aside from source and redactional debates, it is clear that the received form of the Fourth Gospel is a conjugate text with a definite temporality.

Even more than this, it is apparent that the Gospel displays a distinctive sense of chronology. Until the late 20th century, however, the hegemony of a modernistic hermeneutics of suspicion promoted dismembering the text rather than attempting to understand its alternative

⁸³ Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 1:xxvi.

⁸⁴ For example, see Francis J. Moloney, "The Structure and Message of John 13:1–38," *ABR* 34 (1986): 2; Dodd, *Interpretation*, 309; Beasley-Murray, *John*, xci; Brodie, *Gospel According to John*, 23; Köstenberger, *Encountering John*, 260; Robert Kysar, *John* (ACNT; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986), 21; Barclay M. Newman, "Some Observations Regarding the Argument, Structure and Literary Characteristics of the Gospel of John," *BT* 26:2 (1975): 234; Burge, "Literary Seams," 17; Thielman, "Style," 172; and Edward A. McDowell, "The Structural Integrity of the Fourth Gospel," *RevExp* 34:4 (1937): 397–416.

⁸⁵ Østenstad, "Structure," 41; see also Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 56.

temporalities. Recently, however, Johannine scholars have sought to emphasize the role that time plays in the structure of the Gospel.⁸⁶ There is a growing unease with an absolute chronology,⁸⁷ and a rediscovery of the elusive nature of the text. As an example, Bruce Chilton writes that it is “surprising” that the majority of Johannine scholars claims the Gospel conforms to an absolute chronology representing two to three years “because—read in literary sequence—John’s Gospel puts any notion of time out of joint.”⁸⁸ Attempts at defining the elusive nature of the Gospel as telescopic,⁸⁹ a symphony,⁹⁰ a mosaic,⁹¹ or a thematic conflation⁹² represent huge strides in the right direction but fall short of coming to terms with the deepest level of the text—its temporality. With a more precise understanding of the temporality of a text in hand, we can more accurately acquire a structural configuration.

The final verification is in ancient texts that use pre-modern chronologies and are much closer to the Gospel milieu than Thucydides or Polybius. For example, the pseudepigraphical Epistle of Barnabas is both Jewish and pre-modern in its use of temporality, utilizing a chronology that evokes a “question of times.”⁹³ Even more so, the Fourth Evangelist knew and alluded to the Torah in the Gospel text; and it is clear that the opening chapter of Genesis uses a non-absolute temporality. As a New Testament work of historiography, the book of Acts has at least the elements of non-absolute chronologies.⁹⁴ Perhaps the most significant piece of evidence is the Apocalypse, a work that, regardless of authorship debates, is without doubt a product of the Johannine

⁸⁶ For example, see Brodie, *Gospel According to John*, 25; and Olsson, *Structure and Meaning*, 100.

⁸⁷ Ellis, *Genius of John*, 46; cf. Dorothy A. Lee, *The Symbolic Narratives of the Fourth Gospel: The Interplay of Form and Meaning* (JSNTSup 95; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994), 129; and Kenneth O. Gangel, *John* (HolNTCS; Nashville: B&H, 2000), 1.

⁸⁸ At least, typically-held *modern* (quasi-Kantian or Newtonian) notions of time; see Chilton, *Redeeming Time*, 96.

⁸⁹ Smalley, *John*, 266; and Robert Gordon Maccini, *Her Testimony is True: Women as Witnesses According to John* (JSNTSup 125; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 104.

⁹⁰ Merrill C. Tenney, “The Symphonic Structure of John,” *BSac* 120:2 (1963): 118.

⁹¹ Kysar, *John*, 17.

⁹² Cf. Witherington, *John’s Wisdom*, 87.

⁹³ Sylvie Anne Goldberg, “Questions of Times: Conflicting Time Scales in Historical Perspective,” *JH* 14:3 (2000): 273.

⁹⁴ Gerd Luedemann, *Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles: Studies in Chronology* (trans. F. Stanley Jones; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 7–8.

school. While apocalyptic as opposed to historiographical in genre,⁹⁵ the book of Revelation nevertheless has a pre-modern chronology that is distinctly non-linear.⁹⁶ Whether dimensional, spiral, or possessing some other form of temporality, Revelation confirms the Johannine school was pre-modern and unbound by any form of absolute chronology.

In light of the anthropological, narratological, historiographical and Biblical evidences, it is unmistakable that the Fourth Evangelist constructed a pre-modern narrative utilizing a chronology that was perfectly acceptable to a 1st century reader, and is perhaps best understood by a 20th century reader as dimensional. This discovery will have repercussions for the discussion of the structure of the Fourth Gospel. Ultimately, what makes these evidences even more compelling are the similarities between ancient historiographical narratives and the Fourth Evangelist's use of temporal markers to denote a dimensional chronology. We will explore these ideas in the next section.

4.2. A TEMPORAL CONFIGURATION OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

Perhaps the most significant repercussion of the discovery that the Fourth Gospel is not configured with an absolute chronology but a pre-modern, dimensional chronology is the questions that will need to be asked about the structure of the Gospel. If the Gospel is not configured in a linear, absolute manner, as is implicitly assumed by many modernistic scholars, then certain proposed structures of the narrative may be shown to be imprecise, inaccurate or in certain circumstances, invalid. Because temporality is the fundamental, organizing principle of narrative, it is the base from which an accurate structure must be built.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Other studies of apocalyptic Biblical texts from the ancient world such as Fourth Ezra reveal a spiral-like temporality that is a "non-linear, cyclical progression"; see Frances Flannery Dailey, "Non-Linear Time in Apocalyptic Texts: The Spiral Model," *SBLSP* 38 (1999): 236.

⁹⁶ For example, Francesca Aran Murphy, *The Comedy of Revelation: Paradise Lost and Regained in Biblical Narrative* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 220; and Mark Seaborn Hall, "The Hook Interlocking Structure of Revelation: The Most Important Verses in the Book and How They May Unify Its Structure," *NovT* 44:3 (2002): 278–296.

⁹⁷ Thomas Brodie writes, "the key to the fundamental structure of the gospel is provided not only by the general idea of time, but particularly by the Passover-centered three-year cycle"; while Brodie is insightfully accurate about the first part, I believe it is an example of the implicit assumption of an absolute chronology in John that leads him to the second; see Brodie, *Gospel According to John*, 24.

Unlike modern narratives and perhaps the Synoptic Gospels, the Fourth Gospel's thematic and obscure nature prevents there from being one central organizing principle beyond its temporality. That, and its pre-modern chronology, has limited consensus on the Gospel's structure and produced innumerable proposals. In fact, by one count, in the last half century there have been more than 24 serious attempts at structuring the Fourth Gospel,⁹⁸ and there probably will continue to be a large number produced in the next. One of the difficulties with this number is that many of these proposals are mutually exclusive—especially in the realm of literary structures, where the Gospel's thematic and obscure makeup allows researchers to discover an unlimited number of chiasmic, concentric, and parallel structures.⁹⁹ Another is the incorrect application of the implicit assumption of a modern, absolute chronology. Given the Gospel's non-absolute temporal configuration, there will be numerous viable structures for the Gospel based on varying criteria.¹⁰⁰ At the same time, viable may not mean 'most precise' or 'most rewarding.' All things considered, the most precise structure may not be neat or orderly—at least to the modern reader.

At this point, the obvious next step is to propose a structure for the Fourth Gospel based on a dimensional chronology. After all, "commentators appear doomed for all future to make his or her effort of bringing some kind of order into the Fourth Gospel."¹⁰¹ However, since it is likely impossible for the above reasons to develop an orderly and exact structure, we will set out a temporal configuration of the Fourth Gospel rather than a structure. Unlike a structure, a configuration is a heuristic device generally based on one organizational principle that informs future attempts at structure.¹⁰² Whereas a structure would probably add little to the current discussion, a configuration may add much. We will compose this configuration around a dimensional chronology and the Fourth Evangelist's use of temporal markers.

⁹⁸ Østenstad, "Structure," 33; see also Mlakuzhyil, *Christocentric*, 17–85.

⁹⁹ Carson, *Gospel According to John*, 104; and Brodie, *Gospel According to John*, 21.

¹⁰⁰ C. H. Giblin, "The Tripartite Narrative Structure of John's Gospel," *Biblica* 71:4 (1990): 449.

¹⁰¹ Østenstad, "Structure," 33.

¹⁰² Ruth Ronen offers an excellent critique of the Structuralist desire to find one organizing principle by which to construct every plot model. Her critique is correct; furthermore, there would be a danger in building a complete plot structure for the Fourth Gospel based solely on its non-absolute chronology. In fact, it is an assumed absolute chronology handcuffed to the Gospel text that has cultivated structural disharmony in the first place; see Ronen, "Paradigm Shift," 828.

4.2.1. *The Function of Temporal Markers*

In Section 2.1.5.2., I explained the basic premise for absolute location: in order to locate an event in spacetime, four absolute coordinates are required. In the same way, one method to establish an absolute chronology for any narrative text is to locate coordinates either inside or outside of the text. However, the primary dilemma facing the Johannine scholar is the fact that the Fourth Gospel does not have any absolute temporal coordinates.¹⁰³ As this was a conscious decision on the part of the Fourth Evangelist in constructing a coherent narrative text,¹⁰⁴ it prevents the reader from locating the narrative along an absolute time line and further suggests that the Gospel text was configured with a non-absolute chronology.¹⁰⁵ Instead of absolute coordinates, the non-absolute Gospel text was configured with *temporal markers*.

Temporal markers¹⁰⁶ fulfill several general functions in narrative.¹⁰⁷ The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines its linguistic root as “a word or expression whose meaning is dependent on the context in which it is used.”¹⁰⁸ Thus, a temporal marker is a phrase that marks time relative to a given context. In narrative, a temporal marker usually originates

¹⁰³ To the average reader, it may appear that the Fourth Gospel possesses what amounts to an absolute temporal coordinate: “Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour” (Jn 19:14a NASB). However, this statement is actually a relative reckoning of time rather than an absolute coordinate. If the Evangelist had aligned the Gospel narrative to an absolute time frame, then a relative time statement could prove useful in determining the coordinates of local events. Without such an alignment, such a task is impossible: “*Exakte Zeitpositionsangaben*, d. h. kalendarische Datierungen der erzählten Ereignisse, finden sich in der johanneischen Erzählung nicht,” states Jörg Frey; see Frey, *Eschatologie II*, 154.

¹⁰⁴ The Fourth Evangelist certainly knew absolute temporal coordinates—there are numerous ancient examples including Gen 7:11; 2 Kgs 25:27; Ezra 7:8–9; Esth 3:13; 8:9; Jer 52:4; Ezek 1:1–2, 24:1; Hag 1:1, 2:1; Zech 1:7; 1 Macc 1:54; Jdt 2:1; Bar 1:2; AddEsth 1:1; Jub 1:1; 14:1; 1QDM 1:1; 4QCommGen A 2:1; 4QCalendrical Doc A, et al.; Josephus *Ant.* 12.248.

¹⁰⁵ While it is possible to construct a narrative that does not contain any absolute temporal coordinates but is configured with an absolute temporality, such a narrative would be very uncommon and experimental or subversive. In the pre-modern world, the reverse was not always the case.

¹⁰⁶ ‘Temporal marker’ is the term that I will use throughout this work to describe this device that is also known as a segmentation marker, discourse marker, temporal deictic, temporal indexical, or temporal adverbial; see Bestgen and Vonk, “Temporal Adverbials,” 75.

¹⁰⁷ While there are excellent discussions and nuances about temporal markers, anything but a general concept of the device is beyond the scope of this work; see Eros Corazza, “Temporal Indexicals and Temporal Terms,” *Synthese* 130:3 (2002): 452.

¹⁰⁸ Pearsall, “deictic,” *Concise Oxford Dictionary on CD-Rom*.

from the narrator and is linked contextually.¹⁰⁹ If a reader is unaware of the narrator's circumstance or perspective, the meaning of the marker is lost.¹¹⁰ Temporal markers are not merely references to time;¹¹¹ instead, narrators use them to signal a thematic shift and to segment narratives.¹¹² Finally, to be most effective, a narrator must employ temporal markers at the beginning of a sentence.¹¹³

While all narrative genres employ temporal markers, ancient narratives often used them to denote a non-linear chronology. A quick survey will demonstrate their application in non-absolute narratives. In *History*, Herodotus used vague temporal markers to indicate transitions in his pre-modern narrative.¹¹⁴ Similar to Herodotus, Xenophon (c. 428–354 bc) applied vague and unusual temporal markers such as “after this” and “when the agora is full.”¹¹⁵ Expanding on previous narrative usage, Thucydides often used temporal markers in his narratives as chronological switches and to emphasize a non-absolute chronology—specifically, he used “after this” (μετὰ ταῦτα) as a temporal marker to structure his narratives.¹¹⁶ Pompeius Trogus, while employing more absolute dates in some parts of his narratives, used the temporal markers such as “at about the same time” to segment his primary themes.¹¹⁷ Likewise,

¹⁰⁹ Corazza, “Temporal Indexicals,” 442; and Beer, “Temporal Indexicals,” 159.

¹¹⁰ Corazza, “Temporal Indexicals,” 442.

¹¹¹ For example, “at night” in Jn 3:2 or “the seventh hour” in Jn 4:52.

¹¹² Bestgen and Vonk, “Temporal Adverbials,” 75.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹¹⁴ For example, in Book 3 of *History*, Herodotus uses several non-absolute temporal markers, including: μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα in 3.17.1, 3.46.2, 3.66.2, 3.139.1; μετὰ δὲ ταύτην in 3.24.1, and μετὰ δὲ χρόνον in 3.1.4; and see John Dillery, “Reconfiguring the Past: Thyrea, Thermopylae and Narrative Patterns in Herodotus,” *AJP* 117:2 (1996): 221.

¹¹⁵ For example, in *Anabasis*, Xenophon includes vague markers such as: μετὰ ταῦτα in 2.2.3, 2.4.1, 2.5.1, 2.5.37, 3.2.33, 3.3.6, 4.4.14, 4.7.27, 5.6.12, 6.6.17, 6.6.21, 7.2.12, 7.3.7, 7.3.13, 7.3.46; μετὰ τοῦτον in 1.3.16, 4.6.10, 5.1.5; μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα in 2.3.29, 2.4.23, 6.4.12; μετὰ τοῦτο in 4.6.4, 6.1.7, 7.3.15; μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο in 4.8.25; and the unusual καὶ ἥδη τε ἦν ἀμφὶ ἀγορὰν πλήθουσας in 1.8.1; and in *Hellenica*: μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα in 1.1.1, 1.1.9, 1.4.21, 1.5.15, 1.5.18, 1.6.33, 1.7.3, 1.7.4, 1.7.8, 1.7.16, 2.1.5, 2.1.6, 2.1.31, 2.2.23, 3.4.1, 5.1.10; μετὰ ταῦτα in 1.3.12, 1.6.25, 1.7.5, 6.5.49, 7.1.22; μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο in 3.3.1, 4.6.1, 7.4.12; μετὰ τοῦτό in 4.4.1; and μετὰ τοῦτον in 6.3.7; and see J. W. Roberts, *City of Sokrates: An Introduction to Classical Athens* (2nd ed.; London: Routledge, 1998), 213.

¹¹⁶ For example, in Book 8 of his *Histories*, Thucydides uses a variety of non-absolute temporal markers, including: καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα in 8.14.3, 8.80.4; καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο in 8.19.4, 8.32.2; μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα in 8.22.1, 8.56.1; μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο in 8.39.3, 8.42.4, 8.52.1, 8.62.1, 8.75.2, 8.103.1, 8.104.1; and μετὰ δὲ ταύτας in 8.38.1; and see Wilcox, *Measure of Times Past*, 72.

¹¹⁷ For example, Trogus, *Philippic History*, 8.3.10, 14, 17.1.1, 29.1.1, 34.4.1, 41.6.1; and see Wilcox, *Measure of Times Past*, 109.

Tacitus also invoked “at about the same time” (for example, *sub idem tempus* and *interim*) as a temporal marker;¹¹⁸ he also used more absolute markers as needed.¹¹⁹ Ultimately, examples of temporal markers as narrative partitioners abound in ancient narratives: in Hellenistic literature,¹²⁰ in Roman historiography,¹²¹ in Jewish apocryphal and pseudepigraphical texts, and in Biblical books.¹²²

4.2.2. *Temporal Markers in the Fourth Gospel*

A cursory reading of the Fourth Gospel reveals an absence of absolute temporal coordinates with which to erect an absolute time line—particularly in light of the abundant ancient Hellenistic and Biblical examples. The Fourth Evangelist could have inserted one or more absolute coordinates into the text, but for an unspecified reason, did not.¹²³ Instead, the Evangelist organized the Gospel into thematic clusters of episodes each introduced by a temporal marker.¹²⁴ Yet many modern researchers implicitly assume that each temporal marker or time reference applied by the Fourth Evangelist can be treated as absolute and plugged into a time line as a diachronic reference point. The fault is two-fold: first, lack of a synchronic (and diachronic) absolute chronology and coordinates to anchor temporal markers and time references; and second,

¹¹⁸ For example, Tacitus, *Histories*, 1.73, 80, 2.8, 24, 49, 57, 3.76, 77, 4.3, 12, 19, 36, 38, 48, 67, 80; and in the *Annals*, 1.13, 20, 31, 33, 39, 2.27, 49, 68, 81, 3.17, 29, 42, 45, 48, 64, 72, 4.4, 16, 22, 37, 71, 5.10, 6.16, 19, 20, 34, 41, 47, 11.8, 18, 22, 12.10, 29, 56; see Wilcox, *Measure of Times Past*, 98.

¹¹⁹ Unlike many of the other Greek works, Tacitus also utilized several approximate calendrical coordinates to augment his narrative structure; see, for example, Tacitus, *Histories*, 1.18, 52, 2.81, 4.39, 5.1.

¹²⁰ Examples include Aeschylus’ *Seven Against Thebes*; see Romilly, *Time in Greek Tragedy*, 14.

¹²¹ Examples include Procopius’ *History of the Wars*. It is very interesting to note that Procopius (while remaining dimensional) uses temporal markers that feel more ‘chronological’ than much earlier writers; see for example, χρόνος δὲ ὕστερον in *History of the Wars*, 1.3.1, 1.5.30, 1.23.12, 2.12.20, and χρόνος δὲ οὐ πολλῶ ὕστερον in *History of the Wars*, 1.4.1, 1.5.16, 1.13.1, 2.1.1, as well as more ‘traditional’ non-absolute markers such as μετὰ δὲ in 1.5.1, 1.9.1, 1.11.31, 2.5.28, 2.11.31.

¹²² Examples include Gen 1:1, 15:1; 2 Sam 8:1, 10:1; 1 Macc 1:5, 5:55, 11:54; 1 En 40:1, 41:1; 2 En 1:1.

¹²³ As far as I am aware, the only researcher to address this issue in any manner is Edwin Broadhead, who speculates that in the circulation of sources used to compose Mark, temporal markers were “lost”—applied to the Fourth Gospel, such a hypothesis would presume multiple sources and lost fragments; see Edwin K. Broadhead, *Prophet, Son, Messiah: Narrative Form and Function in Mark 14–16* (JSNTSup 97; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994), 30.

¹²⁴ Cf. Collins, *These Things*, 161.

the assumption that temporal markers mark narrative progressions *linearly*—a pre-modern non-absolute narrative is not limited to such a temporal configuration. In all probability, cutting and pasting the individual events of Fourth Gospel to any dissimilar structure or line (even mentally) is futile and destroys the thematic poetic of the text.

In the Fourth Gospel, temporal markers are narrative devices that segment events while upholding thematic unity.¹²⁵ While temporal markers are an aspect of narrative, they are more than meaningless conjunctions;¹²⁶ markers also add a qualitative element to the event.¹²⁷ However, qualitative does not mean symbolic; attempts at finding intricate symbolic overtures in the Gospel's markers should be avoided.¹²⁸ Finally, temporal markers are more than mere "abrupt transitions"¹²⁹—and there are at least two explanations why modern readers often do not recognize temporal markers as clear temporal switches rather than narrative gloss: first, linguistic research by Rolf Zwaan has shown that certain markers imply temporal continuity more than discontinuity and do not adequately shift a reader's focus;¹³⁰ and second, the tendency to try to fit the narrative into modern conventions.¹³¹

4.2.2.1. *Temporal Marker: Μετὰ ταῦτα*

A starting point for configuring the Fourth Gospel is the most frequently used temporal marker, "after this" (μετὰ ταῦτα) and its lexical variations (μετὰ τοῦτο, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα).¹³² These markers are essential for configuring the Gospel text¹³³ as well as a variety of other pre-modern narratives.¹³⁴ There appears to be no significant differences in the

¹²⁵ Tovey, *Narrative Art*, 34; and Robert Tomson Fortna, *The Gospel of Signs: A Reconstruction of the Narrative Source Underlying the Fourth Gospel* (SNTSMS 11; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1970), 56.

¹²⁶ Haenchen, *John*, 2:84.

¹²⁷ Thatcher, "Asides," 431.

¹²⁸ Kysar, *John*, 44; and cf. Schnackenburg, *Gospel According to John*, 1:462.

¹²⁹ Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology*, 232.

¹³⁰ Which may be the case with some of the more vague or obscure temporal markers such as 'after this,' favored by ancient narratives; see Rolf A. Zwaan, "Processing Narrative Time Shifts," *JEP:LMC* 22:5 (1996): 1198ff.

¹³¹ Such as the creation week of Gen 1 or a pre-selected liturgical calendar; see M. J. J. Menken, *Numerical Literary Techniques in John* (NovTSup 55; Leiden: Brill, 1985), 94.

¹³² This marker appears eleven times in the Gospel: Jn 2:12; 3:22; 5:1, 14; 6:1; 7:1; 11:7, 11; 19:28, 38; 21:1.

¹³³ Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology*, 100.

¹³⁴ Besides frequent usage in Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, and others, see also examples in the LXX of 2Sam 8:1, 10:1, 15:1; Hosea 3:5; 1 Macc 1:5, 11:54, 14:24; 2 Macc [7:10], [18], 12:32; Jud 16:21; Tob 10:14^{ab}; and Bar [3:38].

marker's lexical variations in the Fourth Gospel.¹³⁵ In general, many modern commentators recognize the first two primary functions of these temporal markers, yet miss the extended functions. The most obvious function is that μετὰ ταῦτα and its variations connect the temporal segments of the text.¹³⁶ The second frequently recognized function is that the markers denote an indefinite change in time.¹³⁷ However, in light of previous sections, a more precise definition of this function is that these temporal markers signal a nonquantitative temporal shift from one narrative dimension to another—and not merely indefinitely forward on a linear timeline.¹³⁸

Beyond these basic functions, the μετὰ-type markers serve the narrative in several significant ways that critics generally overlook. First, these markers are critical to the narrative contouring of the text. They originate with the Evangelist rather than existing on some hypothetical redactional level¹³⁹—a worthy idea only if one begins with the assumption that the markers are unsophisticated or inadequate—as this type

¹³⁵ So Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 121–2; Barrett, *Gospel According to St. John*, 162; Haenchen, *John*, 1:175; Carson, *Gospel According to John*, 175; contra Schnackenburg, *Gospel According to John*, 2:441; Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 1:112; and John Painter, “Tradition and Interpretation in John 6,” *NTS* 35:3 (1989): 421. In fact, a strong case can be made that these indexicals were somewhat synonymous and interchangeable in the ancient world; as an example, in the surviving fragments of the works of Origen, several of the μετὰ-type markers in the Fourth Gospel have become interchanged with lexical variations: for example, καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο replaces the standard μετὰ τοῦτο in Jn 2:12 in *Fragmenta in evangelium Joannis*, 31; and μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα replaces μετὰ ταῦτα in Jn 3:22 in *Commentarii in evangelium Joannis*, 10.3.12; see Bart D. Ehrman, Gordon D. Fee, and Michael W. Holmes, eds., *The Text of the Fourth Gospel in the Writings of Origen* (vol. 1; Atlanta: Scholars, 1992), 106, 384.

¹³⁶ For example, see Schnackenburg, *Gospel According to John*, 2:441; Brodie, *Gospel According to John*, 556; Kysar, *John*, 115; Painter, “Tradition and Interpretation in John 6,” 421; Larry Paul Jones, *The Symbol of Water in the Gospel of John* (JSNTSup 145; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 77; James T. Dennison, “John 2: Structure and Biblical Theology,” *Kerux* 11:1 (1996): 6–7; and Newman and Nida, *Handbook*, 598.

¹³⁷ For example, see Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 1:150; Schnackenburg, *Gospel According to John*, 2:13; Adolf Schlatter, *Der Evangelist Johannes: Ein Kommentar zum vierten Evangelium* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1960), 73; Carson, *Gospel According to John*, 175; Newman and Nida, *Handbook*, 63, 142, 175; Kysar, *John*, 115; and Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology*, 96.

¹³⁸ Tovey notes, “Commentators generally discuss the function of these as indicators of temporal sequence, and the relative length of time between the events thus connected. I suggest they should rather be seen as devices for connecting segments of narrative. They function as a resumptive device whereby the narrator, as it were, picks up the tale again or indicates that he is moving on to a fresh narrative event”; in this, Tovey is correct; see Tovey, *Narrative Art*, 181; also Jones, *Symbol of Water*, 66.

¹³⁹ John Painter, “Text and Context in John 5,” *ABR* 35 (1987): 28; contra Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology*, 100; and cf. Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 1:150.

of marker was standard in pre-modern narratives. Furthermore, these markers function in a manner that is highly indexical: they reflect the temporal displacement of the narrator or implied author rather than linking the narrative to external temporal contexts.¹⁴⁰ Thus, it is impossible to determine absolute chronological distances or an absolute structure such as modern linearity. Finally, these markers embody smooth narrative segues to informed pre-modern readers as opposed to disjointed movements.¹⁴¹ In this way, these primary temporal markers purposefully shape the Gospel text into a non-absolute configuration.¹⁴²

Before examining several other temporal markers at work in the Fourth Gospel, it is important to address two concerns. First, even though each use of the μετὰ ταῦτα marker by the Fourth Evangelist signals a nonquantitative shift in narrative time, not every use of μετὰ ταῦτα and its variations may carry the same weight. In other words, some μετὰ ταῦτα markers may introduce large narrative acts while others introduce smaller scenes.¹⁴³ In general, the Fourth Evangelist prefers to allow μετὰ ταῦτα to separate temporal dimensions of the text that may or may not be juxtaposed if placed on an absolute timeline. Due to the indexical, non-absolute nature of these temporal markers, absolute temporal relationships cannot be determined from these markers—regardless of what size of narrative they introduce.¹⁴⁴

The second issue is the role of the μετὰ ταῦτα marker in Jn 21:1. Even though the Fourth Gospel text has always included the final chapter,¹⁴⁵ there has been substantial debate over its pedigree. Yet it configures naturally with the remainder of the Gospel text utilizing the same temporal marker preferred by the Fourth Evangelist—similar to Jn 2:12 and 6:1, it signals for the reader a new act in the narrative text. In this case, it alerts the reader to the temporal shift that occurs with any proleptic epilogue (Section 3.2.2.). While other issues may remain

¹⁴⁰ Tovey, *Narrative Art*, 181.

¹⁴¹ Again, they only seem disjointed when judged by an absolute standard; cf. Burge, “Literary Seams,” 20.

¹⁴² There are two more interesting but inconclusive attributes of temporal markers: first, in languages with formal punctuation, markers are most always at the beginning of sentences and paragraphs; second, in the Fourth Gospel most temporal markers are preceded by asides.

¹⁴³ In three places in the Gospel (Jn 5:1, 14; 11:7, 11; 19:28, 38) the Fourth Evangelist employs two μετὰ ταῦτα markers in a relatively short span of text.

¹⁴⁴ As is regularly attempted; see Schnackenburg, *Gospel According to John*, 3:296.

¹⁴⁵ Pryor, *John*, 92.

outstanding, the suggestion that this chapter does not harmonize due to the μετὰ ταῦτα marker is simply erroneous.¹⁴⁶

CASE STUDY—TEMPORAL MARKERS—JOHN 19:28/19:38

One of the more frustrating instances of primary temporal markers in the Fourth Gospel appears in Jn 19:28 and 19:38, where the Evangelist uses two μετὰ-type markers in very close textual proximity. At first glance, this usage of indefinite temporal indexicals seems strained in comparison to the typical usage patterns for μετὰ-type markers in ancient Greek narratives. One of the most predominant features of μετὰ ταῦτα and its variations is their ability to connect and configure large dimensions of events into manageable narrative wholes (Section 4.2.2.1.), while at the same time allow for the warping of large swaths of narrative temporality (Section 6.2.). However, in this section of the Gospel, this does not appear to be the case with the closely aligned events in Jn 19. Nevertheless, the Evangelist does employ these markers as legitimate dimensional temporal markers.

Unlike other dimensions of the Fourth Gospel, associated only via the non-absolute temporal marker, the events separated by Jn 19:28 and 19:38 possess a neighboring connection in time. For this reason, readers often speculate that the μετὰ-type markers serve as narrative segmenters—moving the scenes from one to the next.¹⁴⁷ At the same time, this speculation implicitly assumes an absolute chronology and does not take into account the function of indexicals in a pre-modern, dimensional text. In this situation, the Evangelist narrates the story of the scourging and crucifixion of Jesus (19:1–27), interrupting the events with several narratorial asides (most notably 19:27b). In Jn 19:28, the Evangelist places a dimensional break with Μετὰ τοῦτο, and continues to narrate the events on the cross, and a sense of closure comes through the asides in Jn 19:35–7. Finally, the Evangelist introduces the second dimensional break with the Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα marker, narrates the burial of Jesus, and moves forward (Τῇ δὲ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων) toward the recounting of the resurrection appearances (20:1–21:23).

¹⁴⁶ For examples of those who do try to make this case, see arguments by Patrick E. Spencer, “Narrative Echoes in John 21: Intertextual Interpretation and Intratextual Connection,” *JST* 75 (1999): 54; and cf. Collins, *These Things*, 130.

¹⁴⁷ For example, Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 2:938; Schnackenburg, *Gospel According to John*, 3:282, 296; and Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 510.

As I demonstrated above, one of the primary functions of μετὰ-type markers is to configure non-absolute narratives. In this case, these markers accomplish this by jumping the reader from critical event to critical event. While many, many more events were occurring around the time of the death of Jesus, any of which could be narrated, the Evangelist's goal was to present the most critical events in a narrative configuration best understood by his audience. This the Evangelist accomplishes efficiently through the use of the μετὰ-type markers, a common device in the ancient world. Furthermore, the use of these markers cast these events in the light of the temporal displacement of a witness—the markers are indexicals tied to the temporal experiences of this witness. Ultimately, however, the reason that the Evangelist chose to use temporal markers instead of more common narrative segmenters to narrate these events is to distinguish clearly the multiple dimensions of the passion of the Johannine Jesus. The Evangelist details the *crucifixion* of Jesus (19:1–27), brings quick closure (19:25–7) and a dimensional jump (19:28), then chronicles the *death* of Jesus (19:28–37), brings closure to that event (19:35–7) and another dimensional leap (19:38), and records the *burial* of Jesus followed by a move into a new sequence. As we can clearly see, the primary purpose for each of these temporal markers is to partition, configure, and associate these three critical events from their point of origin in the timescape of the entire witness to the life of the Johannine Jesus into an epic narrative sequence.

4.2.2.2. *Temporal Marker: τῇ ἐπαύριον*

Another much discussed temporal marker in the Fourth Gospel is “the next day” (τῇ ἐπαύριον) and its textual partner, “and on the third day” (Καὶ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ).¹⁴⁸ Excluding the opening temporal marker in the prologue—“in the beginning” (ἐν ἀρχῇ), these markers are the first to greet a reader of the Fourth Gospel and appear primarily in the early section of the Gospel text.¹⁴⁹ Unlike μετὰ ταῦτα and its lexical variants, there has been a great deal of debate about the function of these particular markers in the history of Johannine scholarship. Yet

¹⁴⁸ These markers occur in Jn 1:29, 1:35, 1:43, 2:1; cf. Jones, *Symbol of Water*, 38–9; and Brodie, *Gospel According to John*, 130.

¹⁴⁹ The Fourth Evangelist uses τῇ ἐπαύριον in two other isolated scenes: Jn 6:22 and 12:12.

these deliberations have produced no clear solution.¹⁵⁰ Many researchers have tried to locate a week or seven day system in the Evangelist's use of these temporal markers;¹⁵¹ however, these types of theories simply do not add up.¹⁵² Because of this, other attempts have been made to find symbolism in a six day week.¹⁵³ Most of this research has been limited to these two avenues of approach, and thus is of limited use in this present study.

A starting point for understanding the Evangelist's use of the *τῇ ἐπαύριον* temporal markers is that they are clearly narrative devices and therefore are not symbolic.¹⁵⁴ In light of the fact that they are temporal markers, they behave in the same general manner as *μετὰ ταῦτα*—they are non-absolute, referential temporal segmenters. They cannot be configured absolutely to the Gospel text. At the same time, their usage is such that they alert the reader that the first five scenes of the Gospel occur in close temporal proximity to each other.¹⁵⁵ While not absolute, these markers point to a relatively linear stretch of narrative scenes in an otherwise non-absolute, non-linear pre-modern text. However, in many pre-modern texts, a *linear* progression does not oblige a *literal* marker, and vice versa. In this way, the opening *τῇ ἐπαύριον* sequences point to a dimension of the Fourth Gospel that is temporally distinct from other parts of the narrative.

The Fourth Gospel text contains other examples of non-absolute temporal markers that are more closely related to *τῇ ἐπαύριον* than *μετὰ ταῦτα*. In many cases, a temporal marker such as *μετὰ ταῦτα* or *ἐν ἄρχῃ* opens a narrative sequence that is then configured with other

¹⁵⁰ Harold Saxby, "The Time-Scheme in the Gospel of John," *ExpTim* 104:4 (1992): 9.

¹⁵¹ For example, see Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 114; Schnackenburg, *Gospel According to John*, 1:325; A. Jaubert, "The Calendar of Qumran and the Passion Narrative in John," in *John and Qumran* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1972), 63–4; as well as lists of others in Menken, *Numerical Literary Techniques*, 94; and Saxby, "Time-Scheme," 13.

¹⁵² Compare the six days of divine action followed by one day of divine rest in Genesis with a proto-day, three days of action, an omitted day, one more day of action, and no seventh day in John; see Pryor, *John*, 16; Menken, *Numerical Literary Techniques*, 81; Coloe, "Johannine Prologue," 53; V. Parkin, "On the Third Day there was a Wedding in Cana of Galilee (John 2.1)," *IBS* 3:3 (1981): 139; Newman and Nida, *Handbook*, 55; and a warning of caution by Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 1:106.

¹⁵³ For example, see Coloe, "Johannine Prologue," 53; and Parkin, "Third Day," 139.

¹⁵⁴ Schnackenburg, *Gospel According to John*, 1:297, 325; Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 68; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 34; Pryor, *John*, 16; and Kysar, *John*, 44.

¹⁵⁵ Brodie, *Gospel According to John*, 130.

temporal markers such as τῇ ἐπαύριον, thereby offering the reader further insight into the temporal configuration of that particular scene. These markers tend to remain indexical in nature but are generally linked contextually to primary segmentation markers such as μετὰ ταῦτα. Another key difference between these types of markers is that these temporal markers are not nonquantitative but quasi-quantitative in that the temporal segmentation is defined only loosely (and still highly indexical). The Evangelist's use of τῇ ἐπαύριον in Jn 6:22 is an example of a temporal marker that further conforms to this pattern. Another example of this type of temporal marker in the Fourth Gospel is found in Jn 20:26, "and after eight days" (Καὶ μεθ' ἡμέρας ὀκτὼ),¹⁵⁶ as well as in Jn 4:43, "after the two days" (Μετὰ δὲ τὰς δύο ἡμέρας). In this way, these markers function as true temporal markers but are limited contextually to their specific narrative sequences.

4.2.2.3. *Temporal Descriptor: Ἐγγὺς τὸ πάσχα*

A close reading of the Fourth Gospel reveals several expressions that appear to be temporal markers but, upon closer inspection, are truly temporal descriptors. Perhaps the best examples are the "near to Passover" (ἐγγὺς τὸ πάσχα) phrase and its lexical variants.¹⁵⁷ Within Johannine research, scholars often discuss references to the Jewish festivals in relation to the structure or the temporality of the text. These temporal descriptors are often confused for temporal markers, and in some cases, critics endeavor to use them as keys to unlock the structure of the text.¹⁵⁸ However, references such as ἐγγὺς τὸ πάσχα are of limited significance to the Gospel structure.¹⁵⁹ At the same time, these descriptors are more than mere "editorial explanations,"¹⁶⁰ or worse,

¹⁵⁶ Contra more symbolic views; for example, Schnackenburg, *Gospel According to John*, 3:331.

¹⁵⁷ In Jn 11:55, 6:4; and in 2:13, Καὶ ἐγγὺς ἦν τὸ πάσχα.

¹⁵⁸ For example, see Wolfgang Roth, "Scriptural Coding in the Fourth Gospel," *BR* 32 (1987): 10; Steve Booth, *Selected Peak Marking Features in the Gospel of John* (AUS 7/178; New York: Peter Lang, 1996), 47; Donatien Mollat, *L'Evangile et les Epîtres de Saint Jean* (2nd ed.; La Sainte Bible; Paris: Cerf, 1960), 26–36; Brodie, *Gospel According to John*, 25; Jaubert, "Calendar of Qumran," 63; cf. Carson, *Gospel According to John*, 391; and Smalley, *John*, 149.

¹⁵⁹ Georg Korting, *Die esoterische Struktur des Johannesevangeliums* (vol. 1; BU 25; Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1994), 27–33; Ellis, *Genius of John*, 102; Casey, *True*, 27; Chilton, *Redeeming Time*, 98; and cf. Roger T. Beckwith, *Calendar and Chronology: Jewish and Christian: Biblical, Intertestamental, and Patristic Studies* (AGJU 33; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 294.

¹⁶⁰ Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 122.

devoid of value.¹⁶¹ While not markers, these descriptive phrases are tied heavily into the verisimilar and historiographical poetic of the Gospel narrative.¹⁶²

A clear indication that ἐγγὺς τὸ πάσχα and other similar phrases are temporal descriptors rather than temporal markers can be seen with a quick comparison of the two types of phrases. First, the primary reason ἐγγὺς τὸ πάσχα functions as a temporal descriptor is the fact that it does not segment individual scenes. It merely describes rather than shifts the temporality of the current narrative scene. Unlike the temporal markers μετὰ ταῦτα and τῇ ἐπαύριον, both of which convey the dynamic passing from one temporal moment to the next, ἐγγὺς τὸ πάσχα is static and bound to one temporal dimension. Second, while both temporal markers and descriptors in the Fourth Gospel are non-absolute,¹⁶³ temporal descriptors are not highly indexical. They reflect more the context of the narrative than the context of the narrator. The remaining references to festivals and hours in the Fourth Gospel are clearly temporal descriptors as well. For these reasons, temporal descriptors bring a deeper sense of temporality and verisimilitude to individual narratives¹⁶⁴ but are actually red herrings when applied to a temporal configuration of the Gospel text.

CASE STUDY—NON-ABSOLUTE CONFIGURATION—JOHN 4:45B

One of the most prominent examples of the implicit assumption of modern critics toward an absolute chronology in the Fourth Gospel occurs in their reading of Jn 4:45. While some Johannine scholars are quick to see this verse as a redacted addition, in context it actually forms a part of a narrative aperture into a new narrative dimension in the Gospel (4:43–54)—the episode of the healing of the son of the βασιλικὸς. As such, the clause opens, sets up, and conveys to the reader information that will be needed to understand the story. The verse begins with a relatively innocuous statement, describing the reception

¹⁶¹ Haenchen, *John*, 1:243; and Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology*, 95.

¹⁶² Like markers, temporal descriptors are also not primarily symbolic; contra Harold Weiss, “The Sabbath in the Fourth Gospel,” *JBL* 110:2 (1991): 318.

¹⁶³ An absolute temporal descriptor by any other name would be a temporal coordinate.

¹⁶⁴ These descriptors also promote the implicit assumption that the Fourth Gospel is absolute; cf. Chilton, *Redeeming Time*, 98.

of Jesus by the Galileans. The narrator then relates that the reception was due to “all the things [the Galileans] had seen which [Jesus] did in Jerusalem at the festival; for they also went to the festival” (πάντα ἑώρακότες ὅσα ἐποίησεν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ, καὶ αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἦλθον εἰς τὴν ἑορτήν) (4:45b). However, due to the vague description of the narrator, and the implicit temporal assumptions of many modern readers, the meaning and purpose of the clause is wrenched from its original perspective.

In this verse, the Fourth Evangelist clearly states that the Galilean reception of the Johannine Jesus was due to their having seen all the things he had done at the ἑορτή in Jerusalem. While neither the Evangelist nor the narrative ever identifies the particular festival, a significant percentage of critics identify the festival as the Passover without any clear directive from the text.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, another percentage either implicitly views the festival as a direct link to the Passover,¹⁶⁶ or ties it to the events surrounding the Passover of the temple incident (2:23).¹⁶⁷ The problem with this approach is manifold. First, and most significantly, it is an implicit assumption to link directly the ἑορτή of 4:45 with the Passover of 2:13. Not only does the text not explicitly state this, such an assumption is especially dangerous in a non-absolute narrative containing multiple references to a variety of festivals in a variety of contexts (2:13, 23, 4:45, 5:1, 6:4, 7:2, 8, 10–1, 37, 10:22, 11:55, 12:1, 20, 13:1, 19:14, 31). Second, it is clear from the text that this ἑορτή must be largely unnarrated; for example, the Galileans saw all (πάντα) that the Johannine Jesus had done, which influenced their opinion of Jesus (4:45a). While we know that Jesus did many signs

¹⁶⁵ Barclay Newman and Eugene Nida state that this is the standard interpretation for ἑορτῇ in Jn 4:45; explicit examples include: Newman and Nida, *Handbook*, 135; Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 204; Barrett, *Gospel According to St. John*, 206; Carson, *Gospel According to John*, 236; Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 117; Morris, *Gospel*, 287; Menken, *Numerical Literary Techniques*, 100; Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 160; Frey, *Eschatologie II*, 168; Thomas Knöppler, *Die theologia cruce des Johannevangeliums: Das Verständnis des Todes Jesu im Rahmen der johanneischen Inkarnations- und Erhöhungschristologie* (WMANT 69; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1994), 117; J. Carl Laney, *John* (MGC; Chicago: Moody, 1992), 101; Yee, *Jewish Feasts*, 63; Antony Therath, *Jerusalem in the Gospel of John: An Exegetical and Theological Inquiry into Johannine Geography* (New Delhi: Intercultural, 1997), 76; and even popular translations of the Bible such as the New International Version.

¹⁶⁶ For example, see Strathmann, *Evangelium*, 91; MacGregor, *Gospel of John*, 119; and Paul N. Anderson, “John and Mark: The Bi-Optic Gospels,” in *Jesus in Johannine Tradition* (ed. Robert T. Fortna and Tom Thatcher; Louisville: WJK, 2001), 183.

¹⁶⁷ For example, see Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 1:186; Haenchen, *John*, 1:234; and Schnelle, *Evangelium*, 95.

during the Passover of the temple incident (2:23), we also know that he did many signs at many other times (20:30).¹⁶⁸ Therefore, the festival in 4:45 could be any number of partially narrated or unnarrated festivals taking place in Jerusalem. In fact, if we are not beholden to an absolute chronology the *other* unnamed festival in Jn 5:1 also fits the general description as well, as do several other festivals throughout the Gospel narrative.

While we cannot rule out the possibility that the festival could refer to that particular Passover festival mentioned in Jn 2:12–25, the lack of direct textual support as well as negative circumstantial evidence weighs against making this assumption. In fact, the majority opinion of the equation of the ἑορτῇ in 4:45 with the Passover in 2:13 is inconsistent for at least two reasons: first, the majority also usually hold that the temple incident occurs at the *Todespassa* as in the Synoptics, making a side trip to Cana impossible; and second, the events surrounding the temple incident do not appear to be the types of events that would necessarily encourage a welcome in Galilee—not as might a prophecy (cf. 4:39–42), healing (cf. 9:25) or feeding (cf. 6:24–6) would.¹⁶⁹ In the end, the problem of identifying the ἑορτή lies in the configuration of the text; the Evangelist employs the clause as an undefined (probably completing) anachrony to grant coherence across narrative dimensions (Section 5.2.3.), while the festival itself is a temporal value word describing an indefinite period of time with a range of temporalities (Section 6.2.1.2). As a result, the clause in Jn 4:45 is useful for adding flavor, value and verisimilitude to the narrative on the local level,¹⁷⁰ but lacks the definitiveness of a temporal coordinate or even the indexicality of a temporal marker to align the narrative on a global level.

4.3. AFTERWORD: DIMENSIONAL

As with all narratives, we can best understand the temporality of the Fourth Gospel as a timescape of events spread out before the reader as opposed to a grouping of fleeting or illusory moments. The block universe of narrative created by the Fourth Evangelist is not absolute

¹⁶⁸ In fact, Jn 4:45 does not actually use the word σημεῖα, and this just increases the problem of directly linking it with the temple incident and enumerating the signs; cf. Ashton, *Studying John*, 95; and Keener, *Gospel of John*, 1:628.

¹⁶⁹ Lightfoot, *St. John's Gospel*, 35.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Morris, *Gospel*, 287.

in nature, but in fact composed of multiple dimensions of discrete narrative scenes juxtaposed in the Fourth Evangelist's grand miscellany of temporality.¹⁷¹ In this regard, the Gospel text is in keeping with many other examples from ancient Hebrew and Greek narratives—though to the modern reader, the Fourth Gospel chronology is anything but neat and orderly. Recognition that the deep temporal structure of the Gospel text is non-absolute, and more dimensional than linear, allows a reader to comprehend more clearly its structure and purpose. However, any attempt to dissect the Gospel into parts to redistribute and affix onto an absolute timeline is certain to fail, destroying the sculpted poetic unique to this Gospel.

In this chapter, I demonstrated that within Johannine studies there lies an implicit assumption of an absolute chronology, which leads modern critics to see a disjointed text in the Gospel. Yet a number of the alleged flaws in the temporal mechanics of the Fourth Gospel are nothing more than an unfamiliar, pre-modern chronology at work in an ancient narrative. Only when contrasted to an absolute timeline does the thematic placement of Jn 5 and 6 or the cleansing of the temple seem disjointed. In fact, since the Gospel is non-absolute and without any absolute temporal coordinates in the text, there is no way to ascertain exactly which Passover is linked to the temple cleansing (2:13). In this regard, the standard three year approach to the events in the Fourth Gospel appears to be on very shaky ground.¹⁷² Moreover, a lack of an absolute timeline precludes all but the most primitive efforts at harmonizing the Fourth Gospel with the Synoptics.

Demonstrating the non-absolute nature of the Fourth Gospel was the primary objective of this chapter; proposing a temporal configuration was secondary. Instead of proposing yet another structure for the Gospel, I outlined a temporal configuration that was meant as a heuristic device to contribute to future efforts at structuring the Gospel. In this configuration, temporal markers segment and organize the various narrative scenes of the Gospel text. Temporal descriptors add to thematic and verisimilar value. Again, similar to most pre-modern narratives, the organization is not neat by modern standards, and may very well be textually 'slipshod' on purpose.

¹⁷¹ Cf. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 2:81.

¹⁷² For a recent example of a researcher who agrees that three years is unfounded, see Witherington, *John's Wisdom*, 87; and cf. Schnackenburg, *Gospel According to John*, 1:345.

We can see the purpose and effect of the non-absolute nature of the Fourth Gospel in several areas. As already noted, the effect of such a narrative on a modern reader is often some degree of confusion. Beyond this, another effect of the Gospel's purposeful temporality is thematic: a non-absolute chronology granted the Evangelist the ability to develop a deep, weighty, and thematic *tour de force* while remaining faithful to the source history. Modern historians use different techniques in temporally absolute narratives to achieve similar results. Furthermore, the nature of this narrative denigrates the reader's view of clock time and temporal progression. The narrative places the emphasis on the larger picture. The non-absolute Gospel provokes a sense of a mellow flow with heightened suspense to a clear climax.¹⁷³ In this chapter, we discussed an original solution to the structuring impasse that exists in Johannine studies. Likewise, we can conduct future research that will further illuminate the pre-modern temporality of the Fourth Gospel. Distinctions between various temporal markers can be developed. Much greater definition can be added to a temporal configuration of the text, and other structures modified or undertaken. Finally, we may be able to build temporal configurations on other pre- or post-modern temporalities that could reveal further clues to the temporal mechanics of the Fourth Gospel.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ Cf. Chaudhuri, "Undivided Time," 25. Similarly, Derek Tovey differs slightly and considers the same provocation asyndetic with a "dramatic vibrancy"; see Tovey, *Narrative Art*, 181.

¹⁷⁴ Ermarth, "Beyond History," 207.

CHAPTER FIVE

TIME IS DETERMINISTIC

Time is just one damn thing after another.

—Anonymous

5.1. NARRATIVE DETERMINISM

It is a well-known metaphor that any reader can read any text-like object and it *is* a text, at least from a functional perspective, even if the original ontological purpose was decidedly non-textual.¹ Within this broad scope of texts are narratives, a special subset of texts willfully designed with a temporal *composition*. It is this composition, this movement or progression through time that is the hallmark of narrative. When we bring this idea to bear on a narrative such as the Fourth Gospel, the concern over composition takes on a whole new meaning. On the one hand, there is an element of diachronic composition: the role that compilation, alteration, redaction, and revision play in the development of most every narrative (whether authorial, editorial, or other).² On the other, there is the element of synchronic composition: the intratextual interrelationships that either cohere or dissociate a narrative. It is to the latter element of composition that temporal mechanics most illuminate the coherence of the Fourth Gospel.

In the last chapter, I demonstrated that the Fourth Gospel is a pre-modern narrative aligned with a non-absolute temporality (Section 4.1.). This recognition provides an excellent segue into the deeper issues of the temporal composition of a text, specifically the deterministic nature of narrative. Previously, I explained that determinism is a temporal

¹ For a prominent example of this phenomenon, see Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1980), 303–37.

² The element of diachronic development of the Fourth Gospel is essential to the study of this text; however, it is due to spatial and not theoretical constraints that I am forced to omit further discussion of traditional Gospel composition study in this work.

theory (Section 2.1.5.3.), and I demonstrated that narrative time is fundamentally deterministic (Section 2.2.1.3.). In this chapter, I will consider the deterministic nature of narrative and then explore the degrees and evidences of determinism in the Fourth Gospel. Whereas investigations of determinism are often epistemological in nature,³ I will consider the narrative determinism of the Fourth Gospel from primarily a functional perspective following suit from previous chapters.

Narrative, as a narrow subset of texts, is by definition incapable of complete incoherence. In light of its finite and composed nature, a narrative is a *closed system*. Epistemologically, this does not mean that readers are Cartesian neutral observers, but merely observers external to the narrative world who are able to see the narrative (*sjuzhet*) as a temporal whole (unlike the author, who cannot perceive the full *fabula*).⁴ The subjective yet external viewpoint of the reader reveals that the composition of the narrative is limited and preset. Therefore, on the most rudimentary level, narrative is fully deterministic in that the temporal composition of the text is frozen from one reading to the next, and its temporal progression is fixed.⁵ However, there is more to textual determinism than this one-dimensional approach.⁶ The temporality of the beginning and ending of a narrative is met in the middle, and a unity of some degree is formed; Aristotle argued that these parts of a work should be highly unified.⁷ Yet unity and cohesion are often elusive qualities, “entwined” amongst the temporal moments of the text,⁸ especially in a narrative with a dimensional as opposed to a generally linear temporality. Nonetheless, temporally non-absolute narratives best illuminate the underlying truth of narrative determinism: “Narratives

³ Further, it is necessary to point out that my use of the terms ‘determinism’ and ‘indeterminism’ do not reflect typical usage of the concepts of ‘determinacy’ and ‘indeterminacy’ in Biblical studies, ideas that refer to whether or not a text’s meaning is linked to the author, text, or at free play; this approach to determinacy is focused on the reader (or the author) and is generally epistemological; for example, see *Semeia* 71 (1995).

⁴ Seeing the whole is not necessarily comprehending the whole, as is illuminated by the struggle of writing history; see Danto, *Narration and Knowledge*, 183.

⁵ Cf. Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History*, 51.

⁶ Similarly, Tanya Reinhart speaks of “possible” versus “practical” coherence; see Reinhart, “Conditions for Text Coherence,” 161.

⁷ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 7–8.

⁸ Meyerhoff, *Time in Literature*, 146.

are radically correlative, enchaining, entailing," because their coherence "is not simply linear but *causative* [*italics mine*]." ⁹

While there are a mass of definitions for determinism, we will primarily articulate this idea as a function of causality when applied to a narrative: "Every event has a sufficient cause."¹⁰ However, there remains the question of the relationship between determinism, causality and temporality. On the one hand, every event, whether cause or effect, is "coupled" with a given temporality, which allows the event existence.¹¹ On the other hand, any movement from cause to effect (no matter how truncated) crosses temporalities,¹² and therefore may be defined or considered in light of a temporal mechanic.¹³ In defending this idea, Hans Reichenbach argued events which "are *causally ordered* are also *temporally ordered*."¹⁴ This is true; what is at issue, however, is the assumed character of the temporality.

Like life, narrative is greater than the sum of its parts,¹⁵ and it is more than discrete events in simple, linear sequence; both comprise an incredibly intricate network of contingency and causality.¹⁶ In most situations, value is afforded to narratives that encompass a clear causal concatenation.¹⁷ However, even post-modern novels that intentionally choose chaos over causality are still deterministic; contrary to popular belief, chaos itself is determinable.¹⁸ Moreover, these types of narratives

⁹ Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 45; furthermore, this idea also differentiates a limited and linear Newtonian determinism from an unlimited and flexible relativistic determinism; see A. P. Ushenko, "Principles of Causality," *JP* 50:4 (1953): 87.

¹⁰ Taede Smedes lists multiple definitions for determinism, including the three key scientific descriptions: "(a) Every event has a sufficient cause. (b) Given the past at any time, only one future is possible. (c) Given knowledge of all conditions and laws of our universe at one time, it is possible to predict its subsequent history"; for more, see Smedes, "Universe," 958.

¹¹ At least this holds true for the finite universe in which we reside; see Miloš Arsenijević, "Determinism, Indeterminism and the Flow of Time," *Erkenntnis* 56 (2002): 136.

¹² Cf. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 1:201.

¹³ Everett W. Hall, "Time and Causality," *PR* 43:4 (1934): 336.

¹⁴ Hans Reichenbach, *The Direction of Time* (Berkeley: University of California, 1956), 39.

¹⁵ Dray, "Narrative in Historiography," 169–70; Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History*, 115; and Steven G. Crowell, "Mixed Messages: The Heterogeneity of Historical Discourse," *History and Theory* 37:2 (1998): 223.

¹⁶ Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History*, 52–3.

¹⁷ Fritz K. Ringer, "Causal Analysis in Historical Reasoning," *HT* 28:2 (1989): 158.

¹⁸ George A. Reisch, "Chaos, History, and Narrative," *HT* 30:1 (1991): 6.

often disconnect causality from an absolute chronology,¹⁹ although what is possible is not always practical for non-experimental narratives, or easily understood by readers normally accustomed to linear thought.²⁰ Yet even in non-absolute temporal conditions, cause and effect is still anisotropic,²¹ and linked by a temporal geodesic,²² which enables the reader to grasp causal relationships and find coherence in the narrative regardless of its preferred temporality.²³ In fact, the complexities of life and narrative will at times even cause an author to displace intentionally events from an absolute timeline for the sake of historical accuracy,²⁴ and even more so for theological and aesthetic coherence—an occurrence evidenced in the Fourth Gospel. Linearity is denigrated; causality highlighted.

Ultimately, narrative determinism is defined by causality but exhibited in coherence throughout the local and global (as opposed to selectively truncated lexical/grammatical) features of a narrative.²⁵ In this regard, coherence in a narrative is dissimilar to cohesion, which is a prerequisite in some degree for all texts including narratives. Unlike cohesion, narrative coherence is not constrained by narrative units such as sentences or verses nor is it necessarily tied to any concrete, linear, or quantifiable mode of narrative.²⁶ While we cannot define coherence conceptually or ontologically,²⁷ we can explore the function of coherence on semantic, pragmatic, and inferential planes of narrative.²⁸ While genre does play a role, coherence is actually counter-intuitive in that

¹⁹ This idea is often argued without distinguishing the type of chronology, though an absolute chronology is clearly the assumption when this argument is made; for example, see Emma Kafalenos, "Toward a Typology of Indeterminacy in Postmodern Narrative," *CL* 44:4 (1992): 396; and Griffin, "Narrative," 1099. The problem with such arguments is that while it is true that causality is not connected to an absolute chronology, it is connected to temporality in general.

²⁰ Ronen, "Paradigm Shift," 830.

²¹ Friedman, "Analysis," 547.

²² Ushenko, "Principles of Causality," 91; and cf. Peter S. Bearman and Katherine Stovel, "Becoming a Nazi: A Model for Narrative Networks," *Poetics* 27 (2000): 81.

²³ Sternberg, "Ordering," 61.

²⁴ David A. Glatt, *Chronological Displacement in Biblical and Related Literatures* (SBLDS 139; Atlanta: Scholars, 1993), 2.

²⁵ Coherence stems from the whole, not excised parts; see Tovey, *Narrative Art*, 260.

²⁶ Rachel Giora, "Notes towards a Theory of Text Coherence," *PT* 6:4 (1985): 700; contra one of several views of coherence in Reinhart, "Conditions for Text Coherence," 164.

²⁷ Barry Allen, "The Ubiquitous Artifact: On Coherence," *NLH* 35:2 (2004): 259.

²⁸ Reinhart, "Conditions for Text Coherence," 164.

narratives with higher degrees of complexity, coalescence, and even coagulation are often more coherent than simplistic linear narratives such as chronicles.²⁹

In fact, the strongly interlaced nature of narrative does not require a high degree of causality in order for a majority of readers to judge it coherent.³⁰ This is the primary reason that highly indeterministic texts still maintain some sense of coherence.³¹ As an example, a narrative causal progression is often marked by an overt connector (perhaps a temporal marker). When the overt connector is absent, it can cause textual incoherence, but in most narratives coherence is nevertheless maintained through intratextual relationships (or perhaps an inference is made by the reader to a metanarrative).³² When the text is read, a reader normally reads with an eye to coherence,³³ and there are many examples of intra- and extra-textual inferences that a reader can make.³⁴ Indeed, the issue of coherence can leave the text altogether as studies reveal that a reader can impose coherence on a completely incoherent text.³⁵

In the end, narrative determinism is analogous to relativistic determinism in that both forms of determinism speak of probabilities. True causality and coherence are qualities of ideal textual states, and as

²⁹ Jerzy Topolski, "Historical Narrative: Towards a Coherent Structure," *HTB* 26 26:4 (1987): 77.

³⁰ W. B. Gallie, *Philosophy and the Historical Understanding* (New York: Schocken, 1964), 29–30, 32, 96ff.

³¹ For example, Brüggemeier's study of collected personal testimonies reveals highly indeterministic texts that are still coherent enough to understand (enough to collate into coherent narratives); see F.-J. Brüggemeier, "Sounds of Silents: History, Narrative and Life-Recollections," *Poetics* 15 (1986): 21.

³² Giora, "Theory of Text Coherence," 710.

³³ Reinhart, "Conditions for Text Coherence," 165.

³⁴ R. Brooke Lea, "On-Line Evidence for Elaborative Logical Inferences in Text," *JEP:LMC* 21:6 (1995): 1469–70.

³⁵ This raises an extremely important question: are readers conditioned to impose coherence on a narrative such as the Fourth Gospel (which many critics view as an impure amalgamation of sources and editorial intrusions)? For those who would emphatically answer 'yes,' this response triggers another question that must be raised: If the imposition of coherence represents the natural order (conditional or not) of reading (and therefore by definition constructing) a text, then how is the reading of a text for aporias, seams, and inconsistencies not an unnatural, illusory enterprise, one that conjures up textual mirages supranatural to the entire diachronic narrative process (text as idea, draft, edition, transmission, and interpretation)?; for studies of imposed coherence, see the discussion of B. Hrushovski's study cited in Reinhart, "Conditions for Text Coherence," 163; and Menakhem Perry, "Literary Dynamics: How the Order of the Text Creates Its Meaning," *PT* 1:½ (1979).

such, more closely resemble a narrative aesthetic than a quantifiable or empirical feature of the text.³⁶ Therefore, it is only possible to describe the deterministic nature of a narrative in terms of the probability of an effect following a cause or the coherence between two events. This concept is inversely proportional to the critical reading process as sometimes employed with the Fourth Gospel—a process that frequently begins at a potential aporia and works backwards toward its relationship with the remainder of the text, instead of starting with the text as a whole and working forward toward potential aporias. In this way, we may describe features of a text based on the probability of their semantic, pragmatic, and inferential relevance to textual causality and coherence. In a sense, the greater the probability of causality, the greater the coherence, and the greater the textual unity and sense of composition. Conversely, a text that contains a high degree of improbable causal progressions is likely to be highly indeterministic.³⁷

Throughout this section, I have discussed narrative determinism in terms of degrees. While theological determinism is often considered in abstract terms of black and white, complex and untidy systems such as narrative can only depict their deterministic nature as a function of probabilities that may or may not be predictable.³⁸ For this reason, determinism and indeterminism occupy ends of a continuum rather than two poles of a binary system.³⁹ Further, the polyvalence of narrative levels and dimensions also allows variant degrees of determinism within the same text.⁴⁰ In the next section, I will explore the prob-

³⁶ Cf. Reisch, "Chaos, History, and Narrative," 18.

³⁷ Beyond studies such as the ones by Hrushovski and Perry, this idea can be very simply illustrated from Jn 6:1: "Sometime after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (Tiberias), and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick. Then Jesus went up on the hillside and sat down with his disciples." This narrative maintains a high probability of causality, and a reader would view it as decidedly coherent. If the final sentence were modified to read, "Then Jesus went up to 10 Downing Street and sat down with Tony Blair," despite the fact that the probability of causality decreases appreciably, based on semantic and inferential (including, but not limited to, geographical) data, the narrative still possesses a moderate degree of coherence (bearing in mind that this example is excerpted and no longer part of a gospel). If the final sentence read, "Then Sitka found his pink baby," or "The only thing to fear is fear itself," the narrative would possess a high degree of indeterminacy (even with an overt connector, 'then').

³⁸ Cf. Bishop, "Predictability and Determinism," 179; and Paul Thagard, *Coherence in Thought and Action* (Cambridge: MIT, 2000), 245.

³⁹ Smedes, "Universe," 962, 967.

⁴⁰ Kafalenos, "Toward a Typology," 382.

abilities of coherence demonstrated in the temporality of the Fourth Gospel and argue that it displays a relatively high degree of narrative determinism.

5.2. THE DETERMINISTIC NATURE OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

Before the advent of narrative studies, each generation of critical Johannine scholars possessed a few individuals who either contested or upheld the unity and coherence of the Gospel text: examples include Robert Fortna and Eugene Ruckstuhl,⁴¹ and Eduard Schwartz and Julius Wellhausen.⁴² Unlike the vigorous debate over the structure of the Fourth Gospel, the issue of coherence often remained enigmatic and overshadowed until such time that literary concerns were pushed to the forefront and were used to reframe the discussion in its latest incarnation.⁴³ With the onset of narrative, the conversation over the coherency and composition of the Fourth Gospel took an abrupt turn. Perhaps as a reaction to perceived abuses from an Enlightenment-based historical criticism, the unity and coherence of the Fourth Gospel quickly became an assumed standard for narrative study.⁴⁴ However, the question of the coherence of the Fourth Gospel is at play more now than perhaps ever before, and further deliberations are needed.⁴⁵

In a recent study, John Ashton tenaciously critiques this assumption of coherence, believing that scholars must give “strong reasons” for such an approach to the Gospel.⁴⁶ Laying aside the fact that Ashton’s

⁴¹ See Fortna, *Gospel of Signs*; Eugene Ruckstuhl, *Die literarische Einheit des Johannesevangeliums: Der gegenwärtige Stand der einschlägigen Forschungen* (Freiburg: St. Paul, 1951).

⁴² Schwartz went so far as to claim that the composition of the Fourth Gospel was “lost beyond saving”; see Eduard Schwartz, “Aporien im vierten Evangelium,” *Nachrichten von der Königl. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaft zu Göttingen: Philologisch-historische Klasse* (1908): 148; and contrast Julius Wellhausen, *Das Evangelium Johannis* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1908), 119; cf. Hengel, *Johannine Question*, 84–91.

⁴³ Mark Powell writes: “The perception of causal links between episodes in the Gospels is a feature of narrative criticism new to biblical studies. Under the dominance of historical criticism, the Gospels were usually treated as collections of various pericopes that were not intrinsically related to between units. Narrative criticism, however, looks for logical progressions of cause and effect”; see Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 42.

⁴⁴ Powell states “narrative unity . . . is something that can be assumed”; see Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 92.

⁴⁵ Thomas L. Brodie, *The Quest for the Origin of John’s Gospel: A Source-Oriented Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1993), 38.

⁴⁶ Ashton also argues that the reasons should not be exceedingly convoluted (citing George Mlakuzhyil’s thesis); see Ashton, *Studying John*, 141–8.

strong reasons for questioning the Gospel's coherence are debatable,⁴⁷ he is quite correct in that we cannot merely assume coherence. To do so is to be guilty of the same type of naïve presuppositions that plagued previous generations of historical critics. A further difficulty surrounding this issue in the Fourth Gospel is the bipolar viewpoints held by many critics. Beyond those well-known advocates and challengers of coherence lie numerous scholars who would prefer to have it both ways.⁴⁸ This is due in large part to a lack of moderated language in which to debate narrative coherence; the positivistic 19th century Cartesian techniques and radical 20th century 'free readings' that influence a large percentage of Biblical studies seem ill-equipped.

A moderated approach to narrative coherence is critical because actual narratives, including but not limited to historiographical works, as a whole do not maintain near-perfect "causal integrability."⁴⁹ In fact, on the whole historiographical works are by definition *less* deterministic than fictional narratives due to an inability to maximize poetic language, metaphors, and coherence-granting styles.⁵⁰ It is too easy to set standards or ideal temporal states that no narrative can achieve—and most will resist or subvert.⁵¹ At the same time, due to the nature of the narrative structure of the Gospel as well as the two millennia reception of the text, the most appropriate point of departure for an investigation of the deterministic nature of the narrative should be thought of as 'coherent until proven incoherent.'⁵² From that point of departure, I argue that the Fourth Gospel possesses a high level of narrative determinism based

⁴⁷ Historically, such 'strong reasons' have centered around (or at least were fringed by) unknown redactors, missing pages, mythic messianic cults, theo-political conspiracy theories, and mysterious and (often implausible) phenomenon.

⁴⁸ A striking example is in Kenneth Grayston's study, where the Gospel is considered highly uniform, and then four pages later, not terribly coherent; see Grayston, *Gospel of John*, xvi, xx; for other examples, see Alan Watson, *Jesus and the Jews: The Pharisaic Tradition in John* (Athens: University of Georgia, 1995), 101–7; Meeks, "Man from Heaven," 48; and Smalley, *John*, 98–100.

⁴⁹ Morton White, *Foundations of Historical Knowledge* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 239.

⁵⁰ Kalle Pihlainen, "The Moral of the Historical Story: Textual Differences in Fact and Fiction," *NLH* 33:1 (2002): 43.

⁵¹ As another example, Michael Fox writes that if a narrative contains vagueness or obscurity (even intentionally), it is a flaw in the work; see Michael V. Fox, "The Uses of Indeterminacy," *Semeia* 71 (1995): 175.

⁵² For an argument on behalf of this starting point (not assumption), one that stresses optimism over suspicion, see Steven Lukes, "Relativism in Its Place," in *Rationality and Relativism* (ed. Martin Hollis and Steven Lukes; Cambridge: MIT, 1982), 262–3.

on the probabilities of three non-absolute temporal movements: diegetic levels, anachronies, and intratextual diachronics. Further, because most narratives with a long reception history tend toward a high degree of coherence, it will be helpful to contrast the relatively deterministic Fourth Gospel with texts that have a high degree of indeterminism.⁵³ In the end, these temporal movements embody the root causality and coherence underlying a non-absolute and deterministic Fourth Gospel.⁵⁴

5.2.1. *Diegetic Determinism*

The first indication of narrative coherence in the Fourth Gospel is the existence, organization and conflation of more than one *diegesis*.⁵⁵ Generally recognized by theorists as one of the more puzzling aspects of narratives, diegetic levels (or narrative frames as critics sometimes call them), resist standardized or formalistic definitions due to their anamorphic nature.⁵⁶ The simplest example of a diegetic level is the narrative within a narrative; this usually occurs when a character in a narrative begins to relate another narrative. Classic examples of stories within stories include the *Arabian Nights* and Geoffrey Chaucer's (c. 1340–1400) *Canterbury Tales*. Beyond these simple examples lie the majority of narratives that have multiple diegetic levels in some form or another: embedded events and monologues, metaleptic levels, para-

⁵³ The primary example I will use is the Gospel of Thomas. A potential drawback in this contrast is that Thomas is a text but not necessarily a narrative (for a pro position, see Richard Valantasis, *The Gospel of Thomas* (NTR; New York: Routledge, 1997), 6–7, 50–4; for a contra position, see Stephen J. Patterson and James M. Robinson, *The Fifth Gospel: The Gospel of Thomas Comes of Age* (trans. Hans-Gebhard Bethge; Harrisburg: TPI, 1998), 35); nonetheless, there are several reasons why Thomas makes a beneficial contrast: a) while Thomas may not be a highly asyndetic narrative instead of a sayings source, it is in many cases *received*, and its colophonic elements positioned, as a narrative to the modern reader; and b) coherence is tied in part to general genre expectations, which are related in these texts: the probability of a narrative of a Jesus/Apuleius/Judas Maccabeus/Odysseus-type character.

⁵⁴ While a contrast between two highly deterministic texts (such as the Fourth Gospel and one of the Synoptic Gospels) could be accomplished, and be worthwhile, it would require precision beyond the scope of this work; stronger contrasts can be drawn more briefly with highly indeterministic texts.

⁵⁵ Generally speaking, critics usually identify a *diegesis* in a text as a 'level,' a term which does not well reflect the variety of *diegeses* that exist; I will opt for less absolute terms in this work; see Chapter 7.

⁵⁶ William Nelles, *Framework: Narrative Levels and Embedded Narrative* (AUS 19/33; New York: Peter Lang, 1997), 1.

textual or incomplete frames, and authorial or narratorial intrusions, all with different structures and purposes.⁵⁷

In light of this, some theorists argue embedded levels and frames only add to the disruptive and indeterministic nature of narrative.⁵⁸ This argument is only half true; diegetic levels can both add and subtract from narrative coherence. While very basic narratives exist without frames or levels,⁵⁹ these elementary narratives are not necessarily more coherent than a multi-diegetic narrative.⁶⁰ Since most narratives of any length are multi-diegetic, these frames and levels affect coherence based upon their use and organization. Many narratives such as the Fourth Gospel employ frames as a part of their narrative strategy,⁶¹ and when these levels are well-organized and inter-connected, they reinforce one another.⁶² In the Fourth Gospel, the prologue, narratorial asides and the repetitive *testimoniums* in the conclusion of the Gospel cross diegetic boundaries and work to add coherence to the text by smoothing dimensional jumps and filling in informational gaps for the reader.⁶³ This stands in contrast to indeterministic texts, wherein diegetic levels can degrade coherence through contamination⁶⁴ or dissociation.⁶⁵ We

⁵⁷ Erin McGlothlin, "No Time Like the Present: Narrative and Time in Art Spiegelman's *Maus*," *Narrative* 11:2 (2003): 181.

⁵⁸ Claus Uhlig, "Forms of Time and Varieties of Change in Literary Texts," *CL* 37:4 (1985): 299; also, Ursula Heise argues that they may or may not be disruptive; Heise, *Chronoschisms*, 59.

⁵⁹ For example, "Eric and Jason went to the movie," moves on only one temporal plane—a basic (and boring) narrative.

⁶⁰ For example, a very simple multi-diegetic narrative (by virtue of a narratorial intrusion), "Eric and Jason went to the movie (that I had told them about)," is no less coherent than the original (in fact, it is perhaps more coherent).

⁶¹ As does Thucydides, for example; see David Gribble, "Narrator Interventions in Thucydides," *JHS* 118 (1998): 54.

⁶² Viveca Füreby, "A Structural Model of Phenomena with Embedding in Literature and Other Arts," *PT* 10:4 (1989): 767.

⁶³ Examples include Jn 1:1–18, 37, 41, 2:11, 3:24, 4:9, 44–5, 54, 5:2–3, 6:1, 71, 9:7, 12:15–6, 19:13, 17, 24, 35–7, 20:9, 16, 31, 21:24; and for the issue of asides granting coherence, cf. Salvador J. Fajardo, "The Frame as Formal Contrast: Boccaccio and Cervantes," *CL* 36:1 (1984): 2.

⁶⁴ An example includes John Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman*; see H. W. Fawcner, *The Timescapes of John Fowles* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University, 1984), 52–58.

⁶⁵ For example, the majority of the non-parabolic events narrated in the spoken words of Thomas's Jesus do not associate well with the diegesis of the actual speaking (narration) (e.g., *Gos. Thom.* 3, 11, 29, 38, 39, 50, 78, 111; exceptions include *Gos. Thom.* 1, 60, 79, 100); similarly, the elements of the parabolic diegesis are rarely related to the primary diegesis of Jesus' speaking (e.g., *Gos. Thom.* 7, 10, 14, 43, 71, 102; exceptions include *Gos. Thom.* 22).

will more fully explore the temporal mechanics of Johannine diegeses in Chapter 7.

5.2.2. *Diachronic Determinism*

The second evidence of narrative coherence in the Fourth Gospel is the temporal and causal progression of *intratextual diachronics*. More plainly stated, ‘intratextual diachronics’ is the term for the relationship between any event in a narrative that at any moment associates with earlier and later (as opposed to forward and back, or past and future) events, including events beyond the temporal edges of the text.⁶⁶ We may also call this associative process *emplotment*, the act of configuring two or more events into a narrative whole.⁶⁷ When a narrator weaves narrative events together (similar to a musician who links notes in a musical melody), this temporal progression is experienced as a whole and it thereby grants some degree of coherence. The problem, however, is in the weaving: as the number of possible intratextual diachronics increases exponentially (say from a child’s story to a history of the founding of Virginia), the process of emplotment also increases exponentially in difficulty.⁶⁸ In fact, virtually every deficiency one could see in a narrative, whether fiction or historiography, arises as a result of the intratextual diachronics—the relationship between any two events in the text.⁶⁹ At the same time, a narrative is a finite text that recounts a very limited subset of events out of a near-infinite set of events, with a subjective purpose in mind, and this process may not only appear artificial but may also create an incoherent narrative out of an otherwise coherent *fabula*.⁷⁰ For this reason, narratives seem most determined and coherent when a reader is able to grasp the majority of the narrated events as a

⁶⁶ Uhlig, “Forms of Time,” 289.

⁶⁷ Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History*, 64.

⁶⁸ We’ll consider some aspects of this issue in greater detail in Section 6.2.2. It is possible to argue that the sheer magnitude of possible intratextual diachronics makes any historiographical narrative automatically incoherent; cf. Allan McGill, “Coherence and Incoherence in Historical Studies: From the *Annales* School to the New Cultural History,” *NLH* 35:2 (2004): 211–2, 226–7.

⁶⁹ David L. Hull, “Central Subjects and Historical Narratives,” *HT* 14:3 (1975): 255.

⁷⁰ Jackson, “Desires of History,” 174; and cf. Barbara Herrnstein Smith, “Narrative Versions, Narrative Theories,” in *On Narrative* (ed. W. J. T. Mitchell; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1981), 217.

part of the whole narration—and when the number of orphaned events is at a minimum.⁷¹ This is the case with the Fourth Gospel.⁷²

There are at least three factors that affect the diachronic coherence of a text. The first, and most obvious, is the *temporal extension of meaning*. While each individual, limited event in a narrative is imbued with a certain value,⁷³ the locus of narrative value is in the temporal extension from one event to another. This value is related to the deterministic nature of a narrative in that the greater the sense of causality, the greater the sense of coherence. A narrative can accomplish this in more than one manner: the standard for an absolute temporal system is that earlier events grant meaning to later events;⁷⁴ yet at the same time, ancient non-absolute narratives such as those by Homer and Pindar demonstrate that ancient non-absolute narratives passed value from later events to earlier events, and perhaps back again.⁷⁵ Moreover, coherence through temporal extension also applies to existents—consistency across temporalities is critical in the narrative world, and for historiographical narratives, with the actual world (Section 7.2.).⁷⁶ Temporal extension, in contrast to simply any one static event (now), is also necessary for narrative value in historiographical texts in order to produce understanding and analysis.⁷⁷

We can probably best observe diachronic coherence through temporal extension in the various examples of plot studies on the Fourth Gospel.⁷⁸ Not only can critics create a clear synopsis of John, a summary of the Gospel is generally self-evident and comprehensible to the average reader. While elementary, this is nonetheless solid evidence for the basic coherence of the Fourth Gospel.⁷⁹ In contrast, the higher the degree of indeterminism, the more difficult it is to manufacture

⁷¹ Topolski, “Historical Narrative,” 83.

⁷² It is interesting to note that Jn 7:53–8:11 is not only an orphan in temporal mechanics but also in textual criticism—this passage contains zero repeating anachronies and only one historical anachrony, resulting in something of a Thomas-like, saying-source ambience when reading the passage.

⁷³ While I argue that narrative is not atomistic, it is interesting to note that meaning reaches its minimum point at the word/sign level; see Section 6.1. for more details.

⁷⁴ Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History*, 114.

⁷⁵ Köhnken, “Mythical Chronology,” 52.

⁷⁶ C. Behan McCullagh, “The Truth of Historical Narratives,” *HTB* 26 26:4 (1987): 44.

⁷⁷ Cf. Chaudhuri, “Undivided Time,” 29.

⁷⁸ For example, see Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 87–98; and Stibbe, *John’s Gospel*, 32–53.

⁷⁹ R. Alan Culpepper, “The Plot of John’s Story of Jesus,” *Interpretation* 49:4 (1995): 347.

a plot model—an average reader would be hard pressed to construct a plot model for the Gospel of Thomas, for example.⁸⁰ A final issue surrounding temporal extension within John is the existence of aporias that pull the narrative away from coherence. While most of these aporias have more to do with the dimensional nature of the text, lack of overt connectors, and other reasons we will discuss below, they are not sufficient to drag the Gospel into indeterminism any more than the aporias that unduly encumber modern narratives such as George Eliot's *Adam Bede*,⁸¹ Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native*,⁸² Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*,⁸³ and James Joyce's *Ulysses*.⁸⁴

The second factor that affects the diachronic coherence of a narrative is the usage of *textual inferences*.⁸⁵ Textual inferences are the ties that bind narrative coherence on the local and global level;⁸⁶ they constitute an interlocking assortment of various referentials drawn from inside (or at times outside) the narrative world during the reading process.⁸⁷ In many cases, inferences work against aporias in the text. Modern research of the Fourth Gospel reveals a seemingly binary opposition in a predominantly positivistic approach: either aporias exist and destroy

⁸⁰ Many studies on the Gospel of Thomas shy away from developing plot models in favor of exposition or interpretation of individual passages, such as the work of Meyer and Bloom; see Marvin Meyer, "Notes," and Harold Bloom, "Interpretation," in *The Gospel of Thomas: The Hidden Sayings of Jesus* (trans. Marvin Meyer; San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992); cf. Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 81; and Patterson and Robinson, *Fifth Gospel*, 34–6.

⁸¹ Mary Wilson Carpenter, *George Eliot and the Landscape of Time: Narrative Form and Protestant Apocalyptic History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1986), 32.

⁸² Higdon, *Time and English Fiction*, 31, 37.

⁸³ Patrick Chura, "Prolepsis and Anachronism: Emmet Till and the Historicity of *To Kill a Mockingbird*," *SLJ* 32:2 (2000): 1.

⁸⁴ Patrick A. McCarthy, "Joyce's Unreliable Catechist: Mathematics and the Narration of 'Ithaca,'" *ELH* 51:3 (1984): 613.

⁸⁵ Rebecca Fincher-Kiefer, "Relative Inhibition Following the Encoding of Bridging and Predictive Inferences," *JEP: LMC* 21:4 (1995): 981; and cf. Murray Singer, Arthur C. Graesser, and Tom Trabasso, "Minimal or Global Inference during Reading," *JML* 33 (1994): 422.

⁸⁶ Graesser, Millis, and Zwaan write: "Local coherence is achieved if the reader can connect the incoming statement to information in the previous sentence or WM [working memory]. Global coherence is achieved if the incoming statement can be connected to a text macrostructure or to information much earlier in the text that no longer resides in WM. Readers normally attempt to achieve coherence at both the local and global levels"; see Arthur C. Graesser, Keith K. Millis, and Rolf A. Zwaan, "Discourse Comprehension," *ARP* 48 (1997): 178.

⁸⁷ For an abridged list, see Lea, "On-Line Evidence," 1470.

unity or aporias do not exist.⁸⁸ In this scenario, critics look upon aporias as flaws or as impassable narrative terrain.⁸⁹ Even though many of the classic aporias of the 19th and 20th centuries are unsubstantiated, no human narrative can represent an ideal textual state—and every narrative must bridge textual particles (whether aporias, gaps, events or whatever) through textual inferences. Due to the mosaic and bridging nature of narrative, any narrative can actually produce a nearly unlimited number of aporias if one considers it from any of the nearly unlimited possible angles.⁹⁰ At the same time, the greater the degree of determinism in a text, the more likely the reader hears and listens to the notes of the melody rather than the much larger spaces in between. This is the reason why starting with an aporia and working backward into the text will always result in aggravated indeterminism—in every text, every time. We will discuss the issue of aporias and event relationships in greater detail in Section 6.2.2.; for now, however, textual inferences are those devices that bring coherence to narratives and attempt to cover aporias within texts.

A prime example of textual inferences are *pronominal anaphora*—a type of strong coherence influencers that function on the local level.⁹¹ Due to the interstitial nature of narrative (Section 7.2.2.), there is a continuous need for overt connectors (such as temporal markers) to bond the various narrative elements into causal communion; a text lacking in overt connectors will appear indeterministic to the reader unless an acceptable inference is drawn.⁹² Compared to modern narratives, many ancient narratives are asyndetic in that they lack a cogent system of overt connectors and critics therefore deem them to be unsophisticated and rough.⁹³ This is true of the Gospel genre as a whole. Nevertheless, a narrative can maintain coherence when the reader is able to make

⁸⁸ For examples of binary thinking, see Morton and McLeman, *Genesis of John*, 18; and Robert M. Grant, *A Historical Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 154.

⁸⁹ Burge, “Literary Seams,” 19–21; and cf. Yee, *Jewish Feasts*, 13.

⁹⁰ In this setting, I am broadening the definition to include any anomalies, inconsistencies, unanswered questions, vagueness or blanks in a narrative.

⁹¹ Charles Clifton, Jr., and Susan A. Duffy, “Sentence and Text Comprehension: Roles of Linguistic Structure,” *ARP* 52 (2001): 182.

⁹² Cf. John D. Murray, Celia M. Klin, and Jerome L. Myers, “Forward Inferences in Narrative Text,” *JML* 32 (1993): 471.

⁹³ For example, many of the dialogues of the Fourth Gospel such as Jn 4:7–26 introduce the speaker’s words with variations of ‘he said’ or ‘he answered’; in contrast, the Gospel of Thomas is entirely without overt connectors between sayings/scenes.

a connection via anaphoric inference to a pronoun in a preceding or subsequent phrase or sentence—a feat generally accomplished in the Fourth Gospel.⁹⁴ When a narrative stretches its pronominal anaphora too far, incoherence creeps into the narration.⁹⁵ When a text lacks a sufficient overt connector, *and* the reader is not able to make a clear anaphoric inference due to an ambiguous pronoun, it greatly undermines narrative coherence.⁹⁶ A consistent lack of diachronic coherence (for whatever reason) throughout a text causes the narrative to possess a high degree of indeterminism.⁹⁷

The final feature that can improve diachronic coherence in a text is the special use of *anomalous textual entities*. A primary example is the orphaned event. As a finite narrative follows its temporal geodesic from beginning to end (Section 6.3.), a determined narrative will also move in a predominantly causal, but not necessarily temporally absolute, progression. When a given event does not bridge with other events through temporal extension of meaning and/or textual inferences, and therefore fails to contribute to the global coherence of a narrative, it creates a diachronic orphan and it will move the text toward indeterminism.⁹⁸ The best example of this in the Fourth Gospel is the orphan-like event in Jn 7:53–8:11. However, even in modern narratives, critics heavily debate the devaluation of determinism caused by orphaned events—and the pericope of the woman caught in adultery is a good example of

⁹⁴ For example, consider the use of pronominal anaphora in Jn 1:29–34; this sequence contains two primary existents, John the Baptist and Jesus, yet there is little possibility of the reader drawing the wrong inferences; for example, the Evangelist writes “he sees Jesus coming toward him” (βλέπει τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐρχόμενον πρὸς αὐτόν), referencing the Baptist, followed by a switch to drawing inferences on both, “this is he as to whom I said” (οὗτός ἐστιν ὑπὲρ οὗ ἐγὼ εἶπον), and completing the move to referencing Jesus while identifying John the Baptist, “And John witnessed saying, ‘I have seen the spirit coming down as a dove out of heaven, and he remained on him’” (Καὶ ἐμαρτύρησεν Ἰωάννης λέγων ὅτι Τεθέαμαι τὸ πνεῦμα καταβαῖνον ὡς περιστερὰν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἔμεινεν ἐπ’ αὐτόν). The only possible anaphoric confusion could result from the “him” (αὐτόν) in 1:33 between Jesus and the spirit, but that is resolved later in the same verse.

⁹⁵ Morton A. Gernsbacher, “Mechanisms that Improve Referential Access,” *Cognition* 32 (1989): 138.

⁹⁶ Graesser, Millis, and Zwaan, “Discourse Comprehension,” 178.

⁹⁷ A great example in the Gospel of Thomas is the ambiguous pronoun in *Gos. Thom.* 1; it is impossible for the reader to draw a clear anaphoric inference from the prologue of Thomas; see Meyer, “Notes,” 68; and see also *Gos. Thom.* 4, 14, 43, 50, 59, 60, 65, 72, 83, 111, as well as the ubiquitous use of the indefinite second person in a variety of contexts throughout the Gospel.

⁹⁸ Danto, *Narration and Knowledge*, 250.

a relatively coherent orphan (mostly due to the coherency of internal world propositions, an idea we will take up in Section 7.2.). Perhaps a more quantifiable example of an anomalous entity is the repetition of an event or textual particular.⁹⁹ While repetition can disturb the local causality of a narrative,¹⁰⁰ it also increases coherence throughout the text by adding a sense of global causality, depth of purpose or meaning, and nuance to the particular or event.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, repetition further coheres the text by increasing the degree of intratextual diachronics and accelerating the accessing of information in the reader.¹⁰² Whereas implicit and thematic repetition is sufficient to build coherence,¹⁰³ the more explicit and global the repetition, the more a text is determined. The trademark repetition of particulars within the Fourth Gospel underscores the high degree of determinism found in its pages.¹⁰⁴ We will consider another aspect of repetition in the Fourth Gospel in Chapter 6. A final yet special example of an anomalous textual entity is the anachrony (which we will consider below).

5.2.3. *Anachronic Determinism*

The final confirmation of narrative coherence in the Fourth Gospel is the consistent use of *anachronies* in the text. Long an interest of narratologists and narrative critics, anachronies are basically temporal deviations in the order, organization, or attention of the text.¹⁰⁵ These

⁹⁹ I am specifically referring to global or thematic repetition, as opposed to local or grammatical repetition, which generally does not aid narrative coherence; see Reinhart, "Conditions for Text Coherence," 169.

¹⁰⁰ Heise, *Chronoschisms*, 59.

¹⁰¹ Sternberg, "Ordering," 65; E. K. Brown, *Rhythm in the Novel* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1950), 115; Manuel Aguirre, "Phasing *Beowulf*: An Aspect of Narrative Structure in Fairytale and Epic," *SAP* 37 (2002): 366; Duckworth, "Foreshadowing and Suspense," 73; and John R. Harris, *Accidental Grandeur: A Defense of Narrative Vagueness in Ancient Epic Literature* (LCS 1; New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 126.

¹⁰² Graesser, Millis, and Zwaan, "Discourse Comprehension," 175.

¹⁰³ Giora, "Theory of Text Coherence," 713.

¹⁰⁴ In contrast, the Gospel of Thomas as an indeterministic text possesses a great deal of mechanical repetition in the organization of local events (notably the sayings formula of "Jesus said," or "he said," that opens each section), but a low degree of explicit repetition on a global level within the Gospel of Thomas text, coupled with several clearly anomalous sayings (*Gos. Thom.* 7).

¹⁰⁵ Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 35; further, while avoiding an overly narrow definition for anachronies, I reject 'allegorical' anachronies that have cropped up in Johannine circles; for example, Francis J. Moloney, "The Function of Prolepsis in the Interpretation of John 6," in *Critical Readings of John 6* (BIS 22; ed. R. Alan Culpepper; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 132–4.

temporal anomalies flourish in most texts, including narratives with absolute temporalities. Moreover, anachronies exist in narrative worlds as temporal vehicles to greater depth,¹⁰⁶ all the while emphasizing the power of the author/narrator to determine precisely narrative content.¹⁰⁷ For this reason, a narrative with temporal aberrations is a more complex narrative, requiring greater comprehension from the reader and a greater effort from the author or narrator to cohere adroitly events and progressions.¹⁰⁸

More technically speaking, anachronies generally occur when there is a rift between the actual occurrences (*fabula*) and the created narrative (*sjuzhet*); however, when a historiographical text such as the Fourth Gospel utilizes a largely unknown *fabula* and chronologizes a non-absolute dimensional temporality (Section 4.2.), the isolation and identification of anachronies becomes a slippery process.¹⁰⁹ When a narrative is largely deterministic, it deploys anachronies counter to linear temporal trajectories but in such a way as to reinforce a clear demarcation of causality.¹¹⁰ When these lines of causality are stable, or at least linked, we see an anachrony as consistent and therefore coherent. At the same time, even indefinite anachronies can still demonstrate coherence throughout a narrative via consistent association.

Unsurprisingly, anachronies relate especially well in the thought patterns and language styles that permeated the Hellenistic world.¹¹¹ While often misunderstood by modern, positivistic critics, Plato employed anachronies in his *Republic* to introduce and unite disparate themes.¹¹² Similarly, anachronies provide a resilient foundation for unity

¹⁰⁶ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 2:80.

¹⁰⁷ Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History*, 58.

¹⁰⁸ Carson, *Gospel According to John*, 171.

¹⁰⁹ In one sense, ancient dimensional narratives such as the Fourth Gospel, akin to many post-modern narratives, are themselves large anachronies; without a temporally 'trustworthy' *fabula* or absolute chronology, there is no way to know whether or not an anachrony truly is an anachrony (unless it is tied to an outside event, such as in Jn 8:58). For this reason, I will eschew the use of absolute temporal ordering designations, such as 'prolepsis' or 'analepsis,' unless an absolute determination can be made about a given event.

¹¹⁰ Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History*, 53.

¹¹¹ Lars Lode, "Narrative Paragraphs in the Gospel and Acts," *BT* 34:3 (1983): 328; James A. Notopoulos, "Continuity and Interconnexion in Homeric Oral Composition," *TPAPA* 82 (1951): 81, 88–91.

¹¹² Charles H. Kahn, "Proleptic Composition in the *Republic*, or Why Book 1 Was Never a Separate Dialogue," *CQ* 43:1 (1993): 136; and J. R. S. Wilson, "Thrasymachus and the *Thumos*: A Further Case of Prolepsis in *Republic* I," *CQ* 45:1 (1995): 58.

and coherence in the epics of Homer.¹¹³ These examples underscore a notable function of anachronies and are akin to their usage in the Fourth Gospel, where anachronies demonstrate the narrative text is coherent and determined.¹¹⁴ Then again, certain types of anachronies enforce coherence more than other types: metaphysical,¹¹⁵ historical,¹¹⁶ and completing anachronies¹¹⁷ can display causality but are of limited value in determining coherence, with historical and completing anachronies the most influential of the three. Ultimately, it is the repeating anachronies, especially when considered *en masse*, that truly cohere and determine a narrative.¹¹⁸ In contrast, indeterministic texts may display metaphysical and historical anachronies, but often struggle with consistent repeating anachronies.¹¹⁹

¹¹³ George E. Duckworth, "Foreshadowing and Suspense in the *Posthomerica* of Quintus of Smyrna," *AJP* 57:1 (1936): 70–1; and Notopoulos, "Continuity and Interconnexion," 90.

¹¹⁴ Østenstad, "Structure," 41; Tovey, *Narrative Art*, 34; Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 61; and J. Edgar Bruns, *The Art and Thought of John* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 28.

¹¹⁵ Metaphysical anachronies are references to mythic or sacred times beyond the temporality of the text or world; examples include Jn 1:1–3, 51, 3:30, 35, 5:28–9, 6:38, 40, 46, 8:32, 58, 12:48–9, 17:2, 24.

¹¹⁶ Historical anachronies evoke temporalities beyond the narrative but within the era of human history (or future); examples include Jn 1:17, 2:13, 3:14, 4:5–6, 9, 12, 20, [5:4], 6:4, 31, 49, 7:19, 22, 42, 8:33, 44, 9:3, 10:16, 12:41, 13:36, 14:16, 26, 15:25, 16:2, 7–11, 13–4, 19:24, 36–7, 21:18–9, 23, 24.

¹¹⁷ Completing anachronies occur during the time of the narrative but are non-narrated events; because the Fourth Gospel is non-absolute, it is not always possible to know if an anachrony is truly completing or merely historical; examples include Jn 1:32–3, 48, 2:23, 3:24, 4:8, 44, 45, 54, 5:3, 6:62, 70, 9:22, 10:18, 11:51, 12:6, 31, 17:12, 18, 18:2, 20:9, 29, 30, 21:25.

¹¹⁸ Repeating anachronies reference an event that occurs earlier or later within the narrative and is found to be consistent by the reader; examples include Jn 1:7, 10, 14, 2:19, 3:26, 4:46, (54), 5:16, 33, 6:23, 51, 64, 7:21, 23, 34, 39, 50, 8:21, 28, 9:15, 10:15, 17, 25, 40, 11:2, 4, 8, 11, 57, 12:1, 7, 9, 17, 32–3, 13:1, 11, 19, 21, 33, 34, 38, 14:19, 15:9, 18, 20, 24, 16:16, 20, 28, 32, 17:4, 18:9, 14, 20, 26, 32, 19:39, 20:8, 20, 31, 21:20, and includes the famous Judas 'betrayers' anachronic appellation in Jn 6:71, 12:4, 13:2; for a similar example in the ancient world, see Duckworth, "Foreshadowing and Suspense," 60.

¹¹⁹ For example, the indeterministic Gospel of Thomas has numerous metaphysical anachronies (e.g., *Gos. Thom.* 6, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 28, 50, 61, 77) and historical anachronies (e.g., *Gos. Thom.* 12, 51, 52, 85, 88—although many of these may appear inconsistent to the modern reader), yet there appears to be only one possible internal repeating anachrony, *Gos. Thom.* 38—a striking difference in comparison to the Fourth Gospel.

CASE STUDY—REPEATING ANACHRONIES—JOHN 4:46A

One of the numerous repeating anachronies that determines the coherence of the Fourth Gospel is Jn 4:46a: “Again, he came therefore to Cana of Galilee, where he made the water into wine” (ἤλθεν οὖν πάλιν εἰς τὴν Κανὰ τῆς Γαλιλαίας, ὅπου ἐποίησεν τὸ ὕδωρ οἶνον). At the outset, it is clear that this clause links the current episode with the water to wine episode (2:1–11). While this verse is important for the structure and coherence of the Gospel narrative, critics often write off the first clause as a mere redaction or editorial gloss,¹²⁰ or worse, fail to treat it as of any consequence to the text. However, there appears to be little reason to uphold this low view unless it is to protect the paradigm of a particular critical theory;¹²¹ even if one assumes an absolute chronology, the clause works in the given text even though it is a temporal anomaly.¹²² Indeed, this clause is a consequential element in the probabilistic determinism of a non-absolute text and exists in direct relation to the events narrated. With that in mind, there are several ways in which Jn 4:46a functions to bring coherence to the Gospel.

First, we may note that the verse continues the Johannine trend of realistic, historiographical narrative that readers will find to be consistent with the remainder of the text.¹²³ Thus, it represents a part of a global, epic theme representative of the Gospel (see Section 7.3.2.). Furthermore, the actions represented in the clause are consistent with the reader’s expectations of the Johannine Jesus. Second, the verse clearly links two separate dimensions of the text—the miracle at the wedding in Cana and the healing of the son of the βασιλικός—distinct events clearly segmented in time by non-absolute temporal markers. In fact, this clause exists to do just this: provide a consistent and stable link between two narrated dimensions that are not otherwise connected.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ For example, see Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 589; D. Moody Smith, *John among the Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 161; Schnackenburg, *Gospel According to John*, 1:470; Schnelle, *Evangelium*, 31; and Fortna, *Predecessor*, 296.

¹²¹ For example, Robert Fortna claims that “while 46a in itself creates no obvious difficulty, in order to explain the now pointless character of 2:12a it must be regarded as [added by the Johannine redactor]”; see Fortna, *Gospel of Signs*, 39.

¹²² Cf. Godet, *Commentary*, 444.

¹²³ Howard, *Fourth Gospel*, 191; cf. Morris, *Gospel*, 289; Casey, *True*, 173; and Christian Welck, *Erzählte Zeichen: Die Wundergeschichten des Johannesevangeliums literarisch untersucht. Mit einem Ausblick auf Joh 21* (WUNT 2:69; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1994), 140.

¹²⁴ Birger Olsson argues the wording in 4:46a clearly “shows that the narrator is primarily interested in linking the later event with the previous one”; see Olsson,

For this reason, as well as the potential implicit linking in 4:54,¹²⁵ we may consider there to be coherency between these two events while not necessarily constituting a narrative block.¹²⁶ In this way, the Fourth Evangelist interlaces the narrative with complex coherence. Third, by creating an association across dimensions in the text, 4:46a develops a sense of direction and causality in the text. The “primarily explanatory or identificational” nature of the clause permits plot development,¹²⁷ in contrast with an annal or chronicle that can exist without explicit causative or coherent reasoning.¹²⁸ Finally, this verse—buttressed by the numerous other repeating anachronies—is strong indication of the determining influence of the Evangelist to craft a coherent Gospel.¹²⁹ Without this clause, the reader would have no indication of the rationale of the βασιλικός to journey to petition the Johannine Jesus. It accomplishes its purpose by referencing and repeating a previous event that the Evangelist employs to develop the narrative. For these reasons, the repeating anachronies form a network of coherence-granting links in the Fourth Gospel.

Structure and Meaning, 65; cf. Haenchen, *John*, 1:234; and Schnackenburg, *Gospel According to John*, 1:465.

¹²⁵ While most commentators start counting signs, there are several facts that are critical to understanding Jn 4:54. First, 4:54a does not explicitly state that it is the second miracle compared to the first (ἀρχὴν τῶν σημείων in 2:11; meaning ‘first’ or quite possibly ‘beginning’; see Hengstenberg, *Commentary*, 1:125–6; Olsson, *Structure and Meaning*, 67; Brodie, *Gospel According to John*, 231; Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 1:97; Carson, *Gospel According to John*, 175; and cf. Jn 1:1) at the wedding in Cana—the text does not identify the first sign explicitly (cf. 2:23, 4:45, 20:30). Second, it says it is a second sign (δεύτερον σημεῖον), not necessarily *the* second sign (see also the case study in Section 7.4.). Third, 4:54 is technically an undefined anachrony, because while it probably refers to the sign at the wedding (2:1–11), we cannot say so definitively; furthermore, 4:54b is a completing anachrony, which further emphasizes the need for care in predicting the relationships of this particular passage.

¹²⁶ Critics may be tempted to count signs and consider Jn 2–4 a narrative/source block; see Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology*, 83; Mlakuzhyil, *Christocentric*, 307; and Macchini, *Her Testimony is True*, 107; however, as previously argued, this theory is based on a possibility rather than a certainty—artificially segmenting non-absolute narratives will usually result in multiple yet divergent narrative structures; see Tovey, *Narrative Art*, 242; cf. Brodie, *Gospel According to John*, 231–2; and Carson, *Gospel According to John*, 239.

¹²⁷ Newman and Nida, *Handbook*, 136.

¹²⁸ Cf. Suzanne Fleischman, “On the Representation of History and Fiction in the Middle Ages,” *HT* 22:3 (1983): 284.

¹²⁹ Edgar Bruns writes that an “indisputable indication of the evangelist’s intention to produce a unified piece of work is the way in which he makes cross references”; see Bruns, *Art and Thought*, 28.

5.3. AFTERWORD: DETERMINISM

Contrary to popular belief, there is only one path to follow within a narrative, and that path is determined (Section 5.1.). At the same time, that pathway can either be clear and well-marked or overgrown and hard to follow. In either situation, inferential and semantic probabilities rather than ideal textual states indicate the level of narrative determinism. In this chapter, we attempted a brief, moderated approach to the issue of coherence in the Fourth Gospel by considering the mechanics of three temporal text strategies, each of which augments and reinforces the other.¹³⁰ Each of these strategies present in the Gospel work against notions of either an ideal coherence or a positivistic clumsiness, either of which we can find explicit or implicit in many Johannine studies. Instead, these strategies reveal an authentic narrative that struggles to navigate the “mimesis of a determinate but complex reality.”¹³¹

Taken as a whole, the deterministic qualities of Gospel and other Biblical narratives is a relatively untapped field of study on the edges of narrative and discourse, thematics and linguistics. For example, we may ask how did ancient Gospel writers use principles of coherence to conceive of the events of the early church? While we focused exclusively on three temporal text strategies, there are numerous other text strategies that govern the deterministic nature of a narrative in a moderated approach. Furthermore, coherence is an under-explored yet key player in reader response and psychological criticism. A possible option we may undertake is a study of the distinction between coherence and comprehension of a Gospel text, including its effect on an actual (not virtual) average reader. Finally, this study raises the question of whether or not temporally abusive harmonizations and simplifications also further damage the Fourth Gospel through imposed coherence.

A final question that we must raise considers the moments of indeterminism that occur within the Fourth Gospel. While the narrative reveals a relatively high degree of determinism, it is not absolutely determined—an ontologically impossible standard for human narratives.¹³² While it would require an infinite precision to impart a completely accurate and determined text, the wonder of narrative is that it can

¹³⁰ Reinhart, “Conditions for Text Coherence,” 165.

¹³¹ As Michael Fox points to critics that are too quick to see indeterminism in knotty narratives; see Fox, “Uses of Indeterminacy,” 190.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 173.

still convey meaning and value through its lattice-work, aporia-ridden structure.¹³³ Thus narratives, by their very nature, are imbued with a seemingly ‘Heisenbergian’ element of indeterminism. We can see this most clearly in historiographical narratives, in the contrast of temporalities between annals and historical narratives: the former writes of the present without any actual knowledge of the future or its significance, and the latter writes from the present without any actual knowledge of the past or its world. In this way, time is relative.

¹³³ Reisch, “Chaos, History, and Narrative,” 18.

CHAPTER SIX

TIME IS WARPED

L'horloge du palais, elle va comme il lui plaît.

—14th Century French Colloquialism

6.1. THE TEMPO OF THE TEXT

Most narratives are anything but simple. When a reader encounters a seemingly innocuous enough narrative such as a fable or a news story, it is easy to overlook their complexity—a closer scrutiny reveals those narratives are indeed intricate—and this fact only serves to underscore the inherent complexity of narrative. Even the most polished, absolute modern narratives are pockmarked with knots and chunks in narrative space and time. Ancient narratives are often a heterogeneous coagulation of scenes, themes and intrusions in a dimensional timescape. By its very nature, narrative conforms more to temporal discontinuity than uniformity.¹ For this very reason, an unvarying flow of time in narrative is nothing more than a persistent modern myth. As a reader moves through a narrative, time progresses accordingly, and the very fabric of a narrative universe is at once warped to accommodate the movement of time and the pull of *gravitas*.²

Narrative tectonics shape and contour time within the text as a function of its mimetic nature (Section 2.2.1.5.), just as with the nature of a universe where time is not a container but a participant (Section 2.1.5.5.). While narratives are composed of various temporal dimensions, their inherent determinism allows time to coherently twist, dance, and warp its way from finite beginning to finite end through an assortment of events and episodes.³ In this chapter, I will lay a general foundation for the progression of narrative time by discussing tempo and its role in the Fourth Gospel. Following this, I will introduce the

¹ Bearman and Stovel, “Becoming a Nazi,” 77.

² Cf. Ermarth, *Sequel*, 77.

³ Cf. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 2:79.

idea of temporal events and temporal discontinuities, and concern myself with the function of various types of events. Finally, I will trace a temporal geodesic through the Gospel text. Given its pre-modern and non-absolute nature, the Gospel should reveal a rich opportunity for narrative warpage in its temporal mechanics.

6.1.1. *The Variability of Narrative Tempo*

The first step in delineating the temporal warpage of the Fourth Gospel is to posit an overview of the *tempo* of the text.⁴ One of the primary barriers to understanding and applying narrative tempo is its implicit and elusive nature;⁵ unfortunately, texts and episodes are equipped with neither *adagio* nor *prestissimo* markers, nor epigrammatic time signatures.⁶ In order to define narrative tempo, there are three antinomies of inquiry: reader versus text, speed versus rhythm, and Structuralistic versus aesthetic. Given that the reading process is an interaction between reader and text, critics often define tempo primarily as a function of the reader's speed and movement; however, a text-based analysis of tempo is possible as well as profitable.⁷ Further, the majority of recent studies of narrative have focused on speed rather than rhythm.⁸ Speed is always defined as a contrast between the reader and the text, or perhaps the *fabula* and the *sjuzhet*, while rhythm is derived from textual clues in the mechanics of narrative. Finally, a Structuralistic approach relies in large part upon quantifiable oppositions, whereas an aesthetic approach is more concerned with the quality and function of tempo. In general, critical theorists have considered the latter of the three areas far less than the former, but it is to the latter three I will turn to examine best how aesthetic textual rhythms enrich and bring a sense of *Gestalt* to an ancient, non-absolute Gospel.⁹

⁴ Scholars often derive the contemporary idea of narrative tempo from Günther Müller's groundbreaking work; see Günther Müller, *Morphologische Poetik: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (ed. Elena Müller; Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1968).

⁵ Brown, *Rhythm in the Novel*, 115; and Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (2nd ed.; trans. Christine van Boheemen; Toronto: University of Toronto, 1997), 99.

⁶ Paul Hernadi, "On the How, What, and Why of Narrative," in *On Narrative* (ed. W. J. T. Mitchell; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1981), 198.

⁷ Cf. Ruth A. Berman and Dan Isaac Slobin, eds., *Relating Events in Narrative: A Crosslinguistic Developmental Study* (Hillsdale, N.J.: LEA, 1994), 539.

⁸ For example, Gérard Genette's popular, decoding study of speed; see Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, 34.

⁹ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 2:79.

The nominal tempo of the most elementary narratives is the relatively steady flow of a river of time; and yet, the tempo of most every other narrative is uneven and warped (Section 2.2.1.4.). In light of the mimetic nature of narrative, the most appropriate starting point to describe the function of narrative tempo is the standardized clock- or nature-time. As a general rule, most narratives can establish a rhythmic norm harmonized with the passing of events in life; when a narrator recounts an event more quickly than it would seem to occur, acceleration occurs, and when a narrator tells of an event in plodding detail, the story slows accordingly.¹⁰ Details and tangential events add mass to a text, such as in Virgil's (70–19 BC) *Aeneid* and Statius' (c. AD 45–c. 96) *Thebaid*,¹¹ and cause the narrative temporality to warp accordingly. Within groups of events, a narrative can foreground key events,¹² causing deceleration and narrative density, and subjugate less critical actions to backgrounded subordinate clauses to lighten weight and speed the tempo.¹³ A slowly narrated event is also often a critical event for the reader.¹⁴ Furthermore, ancient narratives such as the Hebrew Bible will establish staccato rhythms in events through the density of action references,¹⁵ usually via non-process verbs.¹⁶

Any object that serves to segment a dimension such as time will also serve to warp that dimension.¹⁷ For example, in sophisticated annals or modern autobiographical narratives, the tempo of the text can be accelerated or decelerated by specific uses of absolute or relative temporal coordinates.¹⁸ In other narratives (especially ancient texts without absolute temporal coordinates), temporal markers, various types of diegetic intrusions, and the beginnings or endings of events or dimensions within the text are all able to trigger an adjustment in

¹⁰ Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 53; and Booth, *Peak Marking Features*, 107.

¹¹ Harris, *Accidental Grandeur*, 144–5.

¹² Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 2:71.

¹³ Berman and Slobin, *Relating Events*, 538–9; and cf. James L. Resseguie, *The Strange Gospel: Narrative Design and Point of View in John* (BIS 56; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 8–9.

¹⁴ Lowe, *The Classical Plot*, 41; Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 5; and Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 56.

¹⁵ Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 80.

¹⁶ For the role of process verbs in the Fourth Gospel, see below in Section 7.2.1.3.

¹⁷ Chaudhuri, “Undivided Time,” 25.

¹⁸ Geißler, “A Culture of Temporal Diversity,” 135.

narrative tempo.¹⁹ Furthermore, the selection and emplotment of these finite narrative events affects narrative tempo as well.²⁰ Each event possesses its own temporality with apertures and closures (Section 3.1.), resulting in an intercalating temporal movement.²¹ In many situations, the protagonist also affects the tempo;²² his or her presence generally decelerates events and his or her absence often abbreviates narrative intermezzi.

In addition to these general parameters, there are several more specialized narrative ingredients that affect narrative tempo—two of which strongly impact the rhythm of the Fourth Gospel. The first is the presence of an *epic direction* that is intrinsic to the text. All narratives go somewhen—even if that time movement is in reverse as in all temporally invariant narratives from Pindar to Martin Amis.²³ Yet the Fourth Gospel, while unique, nonetheless betrays some elements of teleological purpose and design that we can find in other pre-modern, non-absolute epics—such as *Beowulf*, for example.²⁴ In contrast to either constant or randomized plots, a teleological plot emphasizes the contours of the narrative by amassing ballast upon indispensable, ordained events and discriminating them from the ordinary timescape of events from which they arose.²⁵ Pre-modern, non-absolute narratives—including those by Tacitus, Livy, Virgil, Statius and many others—accentuate this process due to the fact that there was no pull toward an absolute time-line to constrain the rhythms of their narratives.²⁶

The second is the presence of *repetition*.²⁷ On the surface, historiographical narratives are themselves repetitions—the repeated mimesis

¹⁹ For example, Aeschylus uses relative temporal adverbials that introduce sections to induce a sense of haste in *Seven Against Thebes*; see Romilly, *Time in Greek Tragedy*, 14; and Dry, “Movement of Narrative Time,” 20–1; cf. Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 5.

²⁰ R. Drew Griffith, “In the Dark Backward: Time in Pindaric Narrative,” *PT* 14:4 (1993): 610.

²¹ Robert W. Funk, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (Sonoma: Polebridge, 1988), 71.

²² Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 2:121.

²³ This is the case in several of Pindar’s odes, as well as in a more modern approach in the work of Martin Amis; see Giovan Battista D’Alessio, “Past Future and Present Past: Temporal Deixis in Greek Archaic Lyric,” *Arethusa* 37:3 (2004): 284–92; and Martin Amis, *Time’s Arrow: The Nature of the Offense* (New York: Harmony, 1991), respectively.

²⁴ Paul Dean, “*Beowulf* and the Passing of Time: Part I,” *English Studies* 3 (1994): 194.

²⁵ John Frow, “The Literary Frame,” in *Narrative Dynamics: Essays on Time, Plot, Closure, and Frames* (ed. Brian Richardson; Columbus: OSU, 2002), 336.

²⁶ Wilcox, *Measure of Times Past*, 101.

²⁷ Harris, *Accidental Grandeur*, 115–7; in contrast, a few critics reject the usefulness of a study of repetition; for example, see Miel, “Temporal Form,” 921.

of events existing at another time. Further, certain narratives, such as epics or those with cultural eminence, exist in repetitious phases in memory, speech, and then text, and back again. While these surface characteristics are simplistic, they nonetheless demonstrate that repetition is undeniably a temporal movement, and this movement will help illuminate the greater temporal mechanics of the narrative.²⁸ Repetition exists at both the global and local levels of the Fourth Gospel,²⁹ and in certain instances can encumber the modern reader familiar with narratives that are more absolute.³⁰ At the same time, repetition can increase coherence and a sense of progression through rhythm and cadence (Section 5.2.2.). Hence, the demand to divine further the temporal function of repetition in the tempo of the Fourth Gospel.

As I demonstrated in Section 5.2.2., repetition adds coherence to a text, but it also adds rhythm and warps tempo as well.³¹ Temporal repetition overthrows an absolute linearity in its attempt to reveal truth obscured by time,³² adding in many pre-modern narratives an “epic breadth” to narrated events.³³ In fact, the ancient reader was aware of the metaphysical rationale for overlapping temporal amplitudes of repetition.³⁴ However, repetition primarily functions as narrative markers in the text that propel the pre-modern reader along in the unfolding of the epic *parcours*.³⁵ With each repetition or retelling, a new phase or element of the monad is revealed incrementally, building toward an epiphany of understanding unable to be described in an absolute time.³⁶ This is in contrast to non-absolute postmodern narratives, which use repetition to subvert a numinous insight.³⁷ In the next section, we will explore the aesthetics of the tempo and rhythm of the Fourth Gospel that impels the reader to consider the testimony of the Beloved Disciple.

²⁸ A great example of repetition affecting tempo with epic results is the *Aeneid*; see Harris, *Accidental Grandeur*, 126; and also *Arabian Nights*; see Naddaff, *Arabesque*, 60, 90–1.

²⁹ Thielman, “Style,” 172.

³⁰ P. Joseph Cahill, “Narrative Art in John 4,” *RelSB* 2:2 (1982): 42.

³¹ Aguirre, “Phasing *Beowulf*,” 366; and Brown, *Rhythm in the Novel*, 115.

³² Hayles, *Cosmic Web*, 119.

³³ Aguirre, “Phasing *Beowulf*,” 367; a prominent example in the Fourth Gospel is the multi-layered, repetitious use of ἐγώ εἰμι, moving from a simple declaration (4:26, 6:20) and equation with providential provision (6:35) toward the surprising spark of divinity (18:5–6).

³⁴ Court, *Reading the New Testament*, 15.

³⁵ Naddaff, *Arabesque*, 61–2, 90.

³⁶ Aguirre, “Phasing *Beowulf*,” 369, 372, 380.

³⁷ Heise, *Chronoschisms*, 58.

6.1.2. *The Tempo of the Fourth Gospel*

In the beginning announces the epic beginning of the Fourth Gospel—the narrative leaps from the point of creation to the human testimony of John the Baptist in one progressive, meaningful movement. A summary of the role of the Word is given in the testimony of the Baptist—introduced by purpose rather than by βίος (1:19–23). The sense of epic lingers as the narrative recenters on the work of the Baptist. One short and pointed conversation later establishes a primary fact of the Gospel: John the Baptist is not the one awaited for in mythic time, but instead announces the Word who was at creation. This conversation is the first day of the narrative; a temporal marker now introduces several more successive days for the text to progress (1:29, 35, 43). The second day is another proclamation from the Baptist—there are now, for a brief time, two protagonists of the Gospel. As the next day dawns in the narrative, there is an even briefer proclamation by the Baptist, and the beginning of a story pace for the remainder of the narrative. There is also a temporal descriptor that attempts to root time as “in Bethany, beyond the Jordan” roots the space of the narrative.³⁸ By the next day, narrative time has passed John the Baptist by—herein there is a clear narrative progression that moves ever so quickly from the advent of the Baptist to the advent of Jesus.³⁹ Ultimately, these quick, successive highlights move the narrative from creation to Jesus.

A new temporal marker introduces the first sign at Cana (2:1). No longer on epic or introductory pace, the narrative settles into short dialogues, monologues and actions with few anchors to slow the story down.⁴⁰ Without fanfare or flourish, the Evangelist tells of the first sign performed by Jesus.⁴¹ The narration also puts forward the first major ‘aside’ of the text: a statement from another world⁴² that slows

³⁸ The temporal descriptor, ὥρα ἣν ὡς δεκάτη, in Jn 1:39 offers a disconnected temporal color to the passing of the narrative sequence, yet remains meaningless for studies of configuration and emplotment (Section 4.2.2.3.).

³⁹ Note how the repetition of the temporal markers moves the narrative successively forward in temporal sequence: initial day, Baptist is centered; next day, Baptist is centered but Jesus is introduced; the next day, Baptist is diminished and Jesus becomes centered; and the next day, Jesus is centered.

⁴⁰ Not that there is necessarily a sense of speed, as is often planned in modern novels; instead, just a slightly uneven, rhythmic motion (as perhaps experienced by a boat on water); cf. Nora Barry and Mary Prescott, “Beyond Words: The Impact of Rhythm as Narrative Technique in *The Left Hand of Darkness*,” *Extrapolation* 33:2 (1992): 156.

⁴¹ For example, Haenchen, *John*, 1:87.

⁴² Technically, another diegetic level; please see Chapter 7 for more discussion.

the tempo ever so slightly to impart necessary information (2:11). The tempo of the asides in the Gospel is pure pause: for a brief moment, story time is at a halt. The event of the first sign is followed by the first major temporal marker (2:12); the narrative announces that it is no longer tied to any pre-established chronology.⁴³ For the first time, the text equally mixes action and dialogue; this is a significant event with future ramifications.⁴⁴ The pace of the action is quick, and the asyndetic καὶς move the temple cleansing along until the dialogue. The temporal descriptor, “and near was the Passover of the Jews,” ties the event to the centrality of the festival and the real time of ancient Jewish life (2:13).⁴⁵ The summary and the asides slow the tempo to signal the end of the event.

An interlude follows, wherein the temporal setting is “by night,” and the rhythm changes accordingly (3:1–2). Akin to John the Baptist, whose testimony is critical to the Evangelist, Nicodemus engages Jesus in a discussion.⁴⁶ However, as interludes go, the story becomes heavily synchronized by dramatic monologues from the lips of Jesus. Synchronized with real time, perhaps, but still slow; the questions of the Pharisee merely appear to be narrative teleprompters for the dramatic monologues. The interlude ends abruptly as the narrative introduces another indefinite temporal marker (3:22)—and another event significant to the Evangelist. The temporal marker and following clauses emphasize the indefinite time that may have passed (or not). Without losing stride, the narrative reintroduces the Baptist, followed immediately with an odd, completing anachronic aside designed to convey information relating to the general temporal context of the event.⁴⁷ The result is the first and last brief dramatic monologue of the Baptist (3:27–36), at the hands of the Fourth Evangelist, introducing “the one.”⁴⁸

A mild transition occurs in time and space to move Jesus and the disciples to Samaria, where the Evangelist paints the scene with a set

⁴³ Such as an absolute chronology, or even a chronology tied to an event (such as an Olympiad or the birth of Jesus); see the case study below.

⁴⁴ Cf. Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 63.

⁴⁵ Although, again it is merely a descriptor; see Chilton, *Redeeming Time*, 93.

⁴⁶ Witherington, *John's Wisdom*, 92.

⁴⁷ The anachronic aside in Jn 3:24 is odd because anyone familiar with the life of John the Baptist would know what happened when he was imprisoned, and anyone not familiar would not know to ask; see Barrett, *Gospel According to St. John*, 184; for completing anachronies, see Section 5.2.2.

⁴⁸ Note the repetition of the pronoun ὁ to provide rhythm and direction to the testimony of the Baptist; see Thielman, “Style,” 172.

of temporal and spatial descriptors (4:1–6). A typical, staccato dialogue ensues until the disciples interrupt.⁴⁹ An event extension occurs and proceeds in time, mostly as action summary, beyond the event to reveal the outcome.⁵⁰ A more concrete temporal marker shifts the narrative to the next event (4:43); the Evangelist's asides and caveats keep the rhythm at a measured pace.⁵¹ The narrative summarizes the events and employs a slight repetition in the motif of the hour of the healing. The encapsulated style of the event coupled with the closing aside emphasizes the actions that surround the second sign at Cana in Galilee.

The dimensional nature of the Fourth Gospel only demands a short pause in the narrative, where a temporal marker introduces a new series of events that appear to have little definite temporal relation to the preceding events (5:1). As we have come to expect, this macro-event is introduced with descriptive pause, a generic temporal descriptor, and the Evangelist's helpful asides. One brief, fluid dialogue later and the invalid is healed, and the text moves on to the significance of the miracle—a Sabbath miracle, on a holy day, and the first true appearance of the antagonists (5:16). Indefinite time passes to a later encounter with the ex-invalid that allows the opportunity for a dramatic monologue by Jesus toward the antagonists; the pace slows from the previous action to the natural rhythm of Jesus' relatively lengthy words, precipitated by the repetitive call to truth.⁵²

The rhetorical challenge offered by Jesus lingers as the narrative again shifts to another time and another place for another significant event—signaled by the Passover descriptor (6:4). The Evangelist tells the story of the feeding of the multitudes with an eye to synchronization with the now typical summaries and pauses. This is followed quickly by another interlude, occurring at night (6:16), and a set of actions with few words that are clear: “I am.” With little pause the narrative moves to the next day, begins with action, then moves to dialogue, then con-

⁴⁹ The interruption is signaled by the mild temporal marker/conjunction, Ἐν τῷ μεταξὺ (4:31), allowing a shift and an extension of the event to report the results of the event.

⁵⁰ Frank Kermode also uses the idea of event “extension” to describe some aspects of the narrative; see Kermode, “John,” 448.

⁵¹ Jn 4:45 is clearly an anachrony—albeit undefined; for further discussion of this verse, see the case study in Section 4.2.2.3.

⁵² Early in this monologue, Jesus speaks the calling phrase, ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, in Jn 5:19, 24, and 25, which establishes repetition in the monologue; see Becker, *Evangelium*; 1:235.

cludes with several mini-monologues from Jesus that are characteristic of the Fourth Gospel.⁵³ The restrictive nature of narrative is apparent as the Evangelist narrates the simultaneous reactions of the antagonists after the monologic interval; in fact, this event sets up a rhythm of monologue-and-internal-dialogue that allows the proclamation to be more easily understood—though in the end, rejected by many. The pace slows with the Evangelist's riddle at the end (6:71).

The next event of lengthy dialogue is introduced in this slower tempo, burdened by the puzzle of walking (7:1), going and coming to the festival. The narrative dwells on Jesus' movements; and it is not until "the festival is in the middle" that the dialogue truly begins (7:14). The repetition of the questioning crowds with a variation of antagonists keeps the discussion lively.⁵⁴ The narrative extends the dialogue during Tabernacles to the "the last, the great day of the festival" (7:37), where Jesus repeats the living water motif, resulting in statements and answers from the crowds. In light of manuscript evidence, the next stretch of question and answer dialogue approaches with little warning and is probably directly linked to the former section and comes immediately after the festival (8:12ff). There are no temporal or spatial descriptors to ground the scene but the rhythm of questions coupled with mini-monologues remains. The narrative continues steadily forward with the gait of the Johannine Jesus (9:1)—and without delay into the healing of the man born blind. At this point the narrative contains a good deal of summary, keeping the progression moving; soon a temporal descriptor is introduced, "a Sabbath" (9:14), followed by the repetition of several serious discussions: the blind man and the Pharisees, the parents and the Pharisees, the blind man and the Pharisees again, and the blind man and Jesus—all designed to open the gate to increasingly longer monologues and greater vitriol from his opponents. The event is extended by the descriptor placing some of the dialogue at "the Dedication, in Jerusalem," in winter (10:22); truthfully, there is little except the growing unease—multiplied by the indefinite time (10:40–2)—that hints of the coming Lazarus event.

Reminiscent of John the Baptist and Nicodemus before him, Lazarus enters without fanfare and the narrative proceeds without any pause or

⁵³ Dodd, *Interpretation*, 303, 409.

⁵⁴ The Ἰουδαῖοι, the ὄχλος, and the Ἱεροσολυμιτῶν all question the teaching of the Johannine Jesus (7:15, 20, 25); on the drama of Johannine dialogues; see Nicol, *Semeia*, 15.

hesitation—the action summary balances against the slight temporal shift.⁵⁵ This section introduces the macro-event and contains a high degree of descriptive pause. From here, a temporal marker rather unusually distinguishes the decision to return to Judea (11:7); but it is the distinction of the road not taken versus the road that is taken that is critical for the rhythm of the rest of the narrative.⁵⁶ Therefore, a journey is announced and undertaken and another marker sets out the events that lead to the resurrection of Lazarus (11:11). Here the dialogue is extended by a more tangible, definite mention of the journey.⁵⁷ The pace remains moderate as a lengthy discussion ensues; it continues to build through a roughly even mix of dialogue, description and summary to the raising of Lazarus. As with the majority of the Gospel, most of the scene remains roughly synchronized with the temporal expectations of actual events. A mild shift joined to a temporal descriptor shuffles the scene to Jerusalem where it is only “six days before the Passover” (12:1); a summary-based action scene anoints Jesus for that which is to come.

An innocuous temporal marker transports the narrative to the triumphal entry into Jerusalem (12:12), accompanied by a rather placid heralding of prophetic proclamation and narratorial asides.⁵⁸ As is often the case, the Evangelist strives for verisimilitude over economy,⁵⁹ keeping the rhythm limited and the pace moderated. Dialogue again opens into the expected question and answer mini-monologues, but at this point the narrative days are growing longer. Another mild transition tinted by a temporal descriptor (13:1), but this time a clear, sacred temporal “hour” has come—more an aesthetic than temporal mechanic in this narrative. This information, couched in a value-based aside, interrupts

⁵⁵ In fact, the aperture in Jn 11:1 acts akin to the beginning of a modern novel: quick, involved, and sufficient; for example, cf. Brodie, *Gospel According to John*, 388; and contra Hoskyns, *Fourth Gospel*, 399.

⁵⁶ The unusual saying of Jesus in Jn 11:9–10 points to the decision that will indirectly lead to his death; see Keener, *Gospel of John*, 2:840.

⁵⁷ The Evangelist's use of ἔλθων in Jn 11:17 does not appear to be an indefinite time process verb (Section 7.2.1.3.), especially when coupled with the colorful descriptor, τέσσαρας ἡδὴ ἡμέρας, although see Carson, *Gospel According to John*, 407–8; and cf. Godet, *Commentary*, 737.

⁵⁸ Such is the “calm” style throughout the Fourth Gospel; see Lode, “Narrative Paragraphs,” 327.

⁵⁹ Consider Jn 12:20–2, which seems unrelated to the scene but grants verisimilitude for this reason—Ernest Renan states “here are verses which have an unquestionable historical stamp”; cited in Godet, *Commentary*, 779.

the rhythm of the narrative only to have it march forward again with the actions in the upper room, and the abbreviated dialogue between Jesus and the disciples. After the washing of feet, the narrative continues the predominantly synchronized dialogue with repetitive and calming mini-monologues by Jesus. Soon night has come (13:30), and the Gospel again enters an interlude of sorts, this time moving surely from brief questions by the disciples to the great monologues of the Gospel. The significance of the words, the emphasis on the use of the first person as speaker, and the repetition built from earlier events,⁶⁰ carries the monologues through to completion without interruption or the narrative slowing in any manner.⁶¹ Nothing prevents the Johannine Jesus moving immediately into the priestly prayer, one long, synchronized monologue with little effect on the Gospel's epic, inescapable progression.⁶²

A change comes in the next scene when action reappears (18:1); as with the prayer, no clear temporal marker is present as expected—the narrative proceeds without pause. Nevertheless, the change in style and place reveals that time has indeed moved on. In a modern novel, a rapid increase in action speed or detail of event might follow, yet this is not the case with the Gospel—actions and descriptions remain relatively brief and steady—in that there is only a slight swell in tempo. An exception is the removal of Malchus' ear, occurring at a quick, rhythmic pace. Descriptors are employed to hold the narrative grounded to the Passover (18:28). By the time of the questioning, the conversation between Jesus and Pilate has returned the narrative to the truncated, staccato structure that moves the text along. This is aided by the characteristic thematic repetition of the Gospel.⁶³

We come to the crucifixion event with a minimal transition followed shortly with a strong temporal descriptor that places the scene in temporal context for the reader (19:14). The action summary and dialogue proceeds swiftly but without the speed (or pause) one might expect for an event on the scale of the crucifixion of Jesus. Many of the asides and narrative explanations, while promoting verisimilitude,

⁶⁰ An obvious example being the repeated emphasis on ἐγὼ εἶμι in Jn 14:6, 15:1, 5, and 18:8.

⁶¹ Cf. C. Clifton Black, "The Words that You Gave to Me I Have Given to Them": The Grandeur of Johannine Rhetoric," in *Exploring the Gospel of John* (ed. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black; Louisville: WJK, 1996), 227.

⁶² Stephen Smalley argues the Evangelist "telescopes" the events in the final 'half' of the Gospel; see Smalley, *John*, 266.

⁶³ As an example in this section, βασιλεία; cf. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 329–332.

merely serve to encumber the velocity of the narrative.⁶⁴ At the cross, a temporal marker fractures the tempo—not with an indefinite time shift but to force a refocusing on the event at hand—with a dramatic pause (19:28). The death of Jesus is told with no discussion, save Jesus’ announcement; instead, just a seemingly dispassionate summary of the events that have occurred. The greatest friction on the tempo of the Gospel occurs here, when the narrative induces false closure by signaling the end of the story has come.⁶⁵ The same is true of the burial event in both style and dramatic pause. This stands in sharp contrast to the synchronized dialogues and monologues that have encompassed the Gospel from the time of the triumphal entry—only the epic beginning to the Gospel has shown a greater concentration of summary.

The next event is introduced by a lexical device functioning as a temporal marker to separate the new day that has arrived from the death and burial of Jesus (20:1). The narrative remains in summary mode but the tempo quickens through lack of encumbrances and a staccato verbal cadence (20:3–9).⁶⁶ The pronouncement of evening marks the final interlude in the Gospel (20:19); it is a succinct, dramatic dialogue and distinguishable in the gift given. The narrative moves to the next scene, signaled by a marker (20:26), but holds the measure tight with the “peace to you” repetition between sections (20:21, 26). The exclamation of Thomas and the authorial *testimonium* at the end of this section sound—for the second time—a concluding note. However, the epilogue is introduced with a temporal marker (21:1), characteristically causing a shift in time (21:4) and place (21:1) from one narrative dimension to the next. The shift, the false closures, and the temporal descriptor of “early morning” elevate the narrative to a positive upbeat sequence—successively more so in the repetition of appearances (21:14).⁶⁷ The event shifts from action into a final dialogue between Jesus and several disciples; a classic repetition sequence occurs with Peter (21:15–7). Without acceleration or a leap, the narrative points

⁶⁴ For example, Jn 19:20 is an anchor that slows narrative progression in an attempt at verisimilitude; see Davies, *Rhetoric and Reference*, 314; and cf. Brodie, *Gospel According to John*, 545.

⁶⁵ Specifically, the authorial *testimonium* in Jn 19:35; see Section 3.2.2.

⁶⁶ Resseguie, *Strange Gospel*, 199.

⁶⁷ This sequence “suggests a broad new horizon which, like a new shore, calls one to break free of constriction,” writes Brodie; see Brodie, *Gospel According to John*, 576; and cf. Ellis, “Authenticity of John 21,” 23–4.

to the future with an open-ended discussion and final, hope-filled, authorial *explicit* (21:24–5).⁶⁸

In the end, the tempo of the Fourth Gospel is far less animated than expected for the modern reader. As a whole, the narrative only gradually fosters an impending sense of incidence.⁶⁹ The style of the Evangelist is often described as “solemn,”⁷⁰ but this particular opinion misses the epic expectancy, the measured march to δόξα (12:23–4). The gospel is not a dirge but an epic told with singular, unswerving purpose. This is augmented by the largely fluctuating rhythm of the Gospel found on the thematic, clausal, and lexical levels.⁷¹ Ultimately, it is the variation in event and rhythm that contours the narrative to bring about a truly epic quality.

6.2. TEMPORAL EVENTS AND TEMPORAL DISCONTINUITIES

Whereas narrative tempo exposes the contours of the Fourth Gospel, it is the emplotted *events* that actually warp the temporality of the text by deforming linear time. What is more, narrative events expose the mimetic nature of narrative. In the physical world, events are artificial elements of the time continuum; they are created when they are subjectively selected by an observer from the timescape of life.⁷² In the same way, it is this distinction of events from a temporal continuum that begets the *fabula*, and it is this distinction of events that allows events to exist and obtain meaning in a narrative world.⁷³ Unlike synchronic and spatial studies from fields such as sociology, historiography and fiction would not exist without the priority of events.⁷⁴ Moreover, while

⁶⁸ Specifically, Jn 21:24–5; see Section 3.2.2.

⁶⁹ Though I do not agree with the means for their similar conclusions, nonetheless see Brodie, *Gospel According to John*, 24; and Tovey, *Narrative Art*, 111.

⁷⁰ Comments about style are related to but not synonymous with tempo; nevertheless, see Brown, *Introduction*, 284; and Schnackenburg, *Gospel According to John*, 1:109.

⁷¹ Raymond Brown testifies, “The basis of the quasi-poetic style lies in rhythm... [which] means only that there is a quasi-poetic balance to the prose of the discourses. I do not believe one can consistently find rhyme, strict parallelism, or exact stress patterns... the language of the discourses achieves a monotonous grandeur by repetition of simple words and not by the use of highly literary vocabulary”; see Brown, *Introduction*, 284–7; as well as Thielman, “Style,” 172; and cf. Smith, *Composition and Order*, 23–34.

⁷² Berman and Slobin, *Relating Events*, 10.

⁷³ White, “Value,” 4–5.

⁷⁴ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 1:217; and Culler, *Pursuit*, 179.

events themselves are artificial and decontextualized,⁷⁵ it is natural for observers to parse narratives, histories, and other temporal continua into various types of events.⁷⁶ Whether definite or indefinite, complex or simple, events are extracted and then deterministically intercalated and interwoven into the narrative.⁷⁷ In this way, events can reveal the deep structure of a narrative,⁷⁸ as well as the mechanics that warp the temporality of a text.

6.2.1. *The Function of Temporal Events*

As a result, events possess two primary characteristics: events are both *temporal* and *particular*.⁷⁹ First, from an ontological perspective, events are temporal in that an event is simply a progression in time.⁸⁰ Based on this description, events possess a duration and temporality. Therefore, an event is a finite progression of time with its own beginning, ending and interval of time.⁸¹ Moreover, events are not limited to any one distinct duration or temporality; events may be as expansive as an era or as slender as a thought.⁸² Thus, even the least of events still has a temporal duration, and it is no less an event than one with a greater magnitude or duration.⁸³ The same is true of events with different temporalities,

⁷⁵ Trussler, "Suspended Narratives," 558–9.

⁷⁶ Rolf A. Zwaan, "Five Dimensions of Narrative Comprehension: The Event-Indexing Model," in *Narrative Comprehension, Causality, and Coherence: Essays in Honor of Tom Trabasso* (ed. Susan R. Goldman, Arthur C. Graesser, and Paul van den Broek; Mahwah, N.J.: LEA, 1999), 94.

⁷⁷ Rolf A. Zwaan, Mark C. Langston, and Arthur C. Graesser, "The Construction of Situation Models in Narrative Comprehension," *PSi* 6:5 (1995): 292.

⁷⁸ Griffin, "Narrative," 1098.

⁷⁹ E. J. Lowe, *A Survey of Metaphysics* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2002), 228.

⁸⁰ While this definition may seem hollow or abstract, the fact remains that if in any given temporal continuum, time should pass but no actions occur, that time may still be considered an event (an eventless event), while I would argue the converse is not true; see Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 18–9; Berman and Slobin, *Relating Events*, 1; Arsenijević, "Determinism, Indeterminism and the Flow of Time," 124; Wilcox, *Measure of Times Past*, 10; and Debra L. Long, Jonathan M. Golding, Arthur C. Graesser, and Leslie F. Clark, "Goal, Event, and State Inferences: An Investigation of Inference Generation during Story Comprehension," in *Inferences and Text Comprehension* (ed. Arthur C. Graesser and Gordon H. Bower; San Diego: Academic, 1990), 95.

⁸¹ Alice G. B. ter Meulen, *Representing Time in Natural Language: The Dynamic Interpretation of Tense and Aspect* (Cambridge: MIT, 1995), 29; and Richard Walsh, "Fabula and Fictionality in Narrative Theory," *Style* 35:4 (2001): 596.

⁸² For example, see Danto, *Narration and Knowledge*, 147; Walsh, "Fabula and Fictionality," 595; and Steven Cohan and Linda M. Shires, *Telling Stories: A Theoretical Analysis of Narrative Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 53.

⁸³ Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History*, 47.

whether simultaneous, superimposed, amalgamated or non-absolute.⁸⁴ Finally, events are temporal in that events occur at a certain time in time, but events also affect other temporal entities.⁸⁵

Second, even though events may possess a duration and temporality, events are more than simple, abstract moments in the passage of time:⁸⁶ events are not only temporal, but also particular in nature.⁸⁷ In other words, events are tangible, solid entities; they are “unrepeatable, ephemeral particulars with a specific location in space and time.”⁸⁸ Furthermore, this description rejects the modern view of an event as a unit of time, akin to an hour or a day, and affirms events as identifiable happenings. Recalling that time is continuous (Section 2.1.5.5.), events are not the atomistic quanta of a temporal continuum but instead divisible, working components that segregate, mark and articulate selected durations of time.⁸⁹ Unfortunately, while events are particular, they are also limited in the scope of their mimesis.⁹⁰

This limitation has often led to critics maligning events merely as the superficial “headlines” of a story.⁹¹ Part of the problem is that the mimetic limitation of events causes event conflation. While events are independent from one another,⁹² they easily blend with other events: any given action or time period may belong to any number of events.⁹³ Another part is the fact that events can be so malleable as to be open to radical reconstitution outside their contextual continuum.⁹⁴ Notwithstanding the fact that events in narrative are decontextualized

⁸⁴ Cf. Beer, “Temporal Indexicals,” 164.

⁸⁵ Danto, *Narration and Knowledge*, 38.

⁸⁶ Françoise Dastur, “Phenomenology of the Event: Waiting and Surprise,” *Hypatia* 15:4 (2000): 182.

⁸⁷ Seymour Chatman, “Reply to Barbara Herrnstein Smith,” in *On Narrative* (ed. W. J. T. Mitchell; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1981), 262.

⁸⁸ Levison, “Events and Time’s Flow,” 341; and cf. Donald Davidson, “The Individuation of Events,” in *Essays in Honor of Carl G. Hempel* (ed. Nicholas Rescher; Dordrecht: Reidel, 1969), 216–34.

⁸⁹ Arthur Danto warns against a Humean approach to events as discrete pellets, distinguished by other interlocking, event-like pellets; see Danto, *Narration and Knowledge*, 85, 141.

⁹⁰ Carl G. Hempel, *Aspects of Scientific Explanation: And Other Essays in the Philosophy of Science* (New York: Free, 1965), 233; Martin Bunzl, “How to Change the Unchanging Past,” *Clio* 25:2 (1996): 186; and Wilcox, *Measure of Times Past*, 10.

⁹¹ Braudel, *Mediterranean*, 2:1243; and cf. Axel Rüth, “The Battle of Bouvines: Event History vs. Problem History” (trans. Jocelyn Holland), *MLN* 116:4 (2001): 820.

⁹² Danto, *Narration and Knowledge*, 286.

⁹³ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 1:184.

⁹⁴ Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History*, 54.

and limited, events actually function as the temporal modules that mold narrative and displace the linear passage of time.⁹⁵ Events are particular, yet incomplete, temporal elements of a narrative,⁹⁶ and it is this incomplete and reconstituted quality of events that determines the degree of narrative warpage in a text.

The simplest explanation for an event's ability to warp narrative temporality is that the density or magnitude of the event is proportional to the degree of warpage.⁹⁷ In other words, the more dense or complex an event, the more narrative time is affected. However, incomplete and simple events also warp narrative time. This seeming disparity demonstrates an important truth about narrative events: events naturally synchronize to a relatively standard magnitude.⁹⁸ Outside of postmodern or experimental literature, it would be unusual to read a narrative that greatly deviates from the standard level of events in typical discourse for that language.⁹⁹ This standardization is ultimately an approximation, as there are different possible magnitudes that can be standardized, but temporal significance is found in the deviations.

These event deviations are expressed in narrative in a variety of ways. For example, narrative theory has long emphasized the differentiation between essential and non-essential events.¹⁰⁰ As a general rule

⁹⁵ Dastur, "Phenomenology of the Event," 182; and cf. Hall, "Times," 122.

⁹⁶ At this point, it may help to differentiate between three different temporal elements: narratives, events, and dimensions. A dimension is a section of a narrative with one overarching temporality, and may be composed of one or more events. At the same time, a narrative may have multiple temporalities (and/or dimensions), and it may be composed of one or more than events. In general, an event will always fall inside the boundaries of a dimension or a narrative (except for repetition, for example). Under the correct circumstances, a narrative could be an event, and it is possible for an event to seem like a dimension; however, none of these terms are synonymous.

⁹⁷ Of course, with any maxim there will always be a limited number of exceptions.

⁹⁸ For example, it is relatively standard to read, "Noël walked to the Circle K to use the phone," but it would be unusual to read, "Noël raised her left foot, then placed it on the ground. Then she raised her right foot, and put it on the ground, taking one step toward the Circle K. Then she raised her left foot..." *unless* such a temporal deviation brought meaning to the original action; see Dan Shen, "Defense and Challenge: Reflections on the Relation between Story and Discourse," *Narrative* 10:3 (2002): 226; and Zwaan, "Five Dimensions," 94.

⁹⁹ This is also a mimetic aspect of narrative; despite the fact that pop culture and folklore would disagree, Flaherty's research into the human experience of temporality demonstrates that any deviation from the norm (in any direction) is the cause for a warped temporality; see Flaherty, "Perception," 79–80.

¹⁰⁰ For example, see Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 53–6; and M. Anne Britt, Charles A. Perfetti, Rebecca Sandak, and Jean-François Rouet, "Content Integration and Source Separation in Learning from Multiple Texts," in *Narrative Comprehension, Causality, and*

of most narratives, essential events often cluster around a standardized deviation, whereas non-essential events are often narrated in a limited or dense manner. Similarly, complex events, or events that are composed of multiple events that cannot be partitioned into simpler, whole events,¹⁰¹ often contain both standardized and deviated actions within the event. Finally, one of the primary ways that narratives show deviation is through the backgrounding of events. Essential events are generally foregrounded events that occur close to standardized norms, but events that are narrated in the background through summarization and subordinate clauses often deviate from the norm for the narrative and warp the text.¹⁰²

As a final point, the narrative event structure of the Fourth Gospel is somewhat abnormal in relationship to modern narratives, especially those in the realm of historiography. A modern reader expects a narrative to be composed of largely synchronized events,¹⁰³ with deviations occurring in small quantities in a neat manner (e.g., in subordinate clauses). What is more, modern historiography most often favors narrative events with a density that is slightly greater than or equal to standardized levels.¹⁰⁴ For this reason, any modern, implicit assumptions about the event structure of the Gospel will be incorrect if pre-modern, non-absolute features of the text are not taken into account. In other words, while absolute, modern narratives often homogenize the temporality of their event structure, non-absolute and pre-modern narratives do not. In the next section, I will survey several types of events used in the Gospel, before considering the impact of implicit assumptions on event temporality.

6.2.1.1. *Macro-Events: Episodes*

The pre-modern, non-absolute nature of the Fourth Gospel allows for easy recognition of macro-events—large intervals of narrative time that neatly encompass multiple singular events, and are akin to an ‘act’ or a ‘scene’ in a drama. Macro-events are continua of time that can be subdivided at will. In the Fourth Gospel, macro-events are often variable

Coherence: Essays in Honor of Tom Trabasso (ed. Susan R. Goldman, Arthur C. Graesser, and Paul van den Broek; Mahwah, N.J.: LEA, 1999), 211.

¹⁰¹ Arthur C. Danto, “Complex Events,” *PPR* 30:1 (1969): 69–71.

¹⁰² Cf. Dry, “Movement of Narrative Time,” 19–23; and Berman and Slobin, *Relating Events*, 151.

¹⁰³ Heise, *Chronoschisms*, 60–1.

¹⁰⁴ Topolski, “Historical Narrative,” 80.

in that events can be grouped into more than one macro-event while maintaining consistency and coherence. In general, a macro-event can only occur when the narrative tempo roughly parallels a synchronizable time,¹⁰⁵ unlike summaries and pauses that exist on the fringes of comprehensible narrative temporality. The macro-events in the Fourth Gospel are economical in both story time and in syntactical construction,¹⁰⁶ wherein there are short stretches of actions, dialogues, and mini-monologues lasting hours or at most days.¹⁰⁷

What distinguishes a macro-event in the Fourth Gospel from most narratives familiar to the modern reader is their dimensional nature (Section 4.2.). Unlike modern narratives where time is configured to flow relative to an absolute time frame, temporality in the Gospel is generally encapsulated in individual macro-events.¹⁰⁸ For this reason, there are no easy temporal segues from event to event; instead, events are pockets of time that can appear more unrelated than not. Many events in the Gospel possess individual apertures and closures that accentuate the dimensional impression.¹⁰⁹ However, these dimensions of events associate via several types of textual couplers, including temporal markers. Often their relationship is thematic—most Johannine events have a similar plot configuration.¹¹⁰ In all probability, the construction of macro-events in the Fourth Gospel is tied to the temporal displacement of the narrative.¹¹¹ Consequently, macro-events are the primary elements that warp narrative configuration.

¹⁰⁵ Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 63.

¹⁰⁶ See Kermode, "John," 445; Haenchen, *John*, 1:87; and Julius Wellhausen, *Das Evangelium Johannis* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1908), 133, respectively.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Tovey, *Narrative Art*, 215.

¹⁰⁸ A number of scholars have emphasized the stand alone features of the Gospel (while omitting the temporal ramifications); see Witherington, *John's Wisdom*, 85; Francis J. Moloney, *Belief in the Word: Reading the Fourth Gospel, John 1-4* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 93-4.

¹⁰⁹ For example, consider the closure effect in Jn 1:28, 1:42, 2:11, 4:54, 6:71, 11:5-6, 12:10-11, 19:35-7, 20:30-1, 21:24-5; or the boundary/aperture effect in Jn 2:1, 2:12, 3:22, 4:43-4, 5:1-2, 6:1, 7:1, 20:1, 20:26, 21:1.

¹¹⁰ Bruns, *Art and Thought*, 24; Moloney, *Belief*, 93-4; Kermode, "John," 448; and Keener, *Gospel of John*, 1:68.

¹¹¹ For example, they probably reflect the mnemonic requirements for regular proclamation of sizeable aspects of the life of Jesus; see Burnett Hillmann Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins, Treating of the Manuscript Tradition, Sources, Authorship, and Dates* (London: Macmillan, 1924), 383; Keener, *Gospel of John*, 1:79; and Carson, *Gospel According to John*, 46.

CASE STUDY—Macro-Events—John 2:12–25

One of the most well-defined macro-events in the Fourth Gospel is the story of the incident at the temple. In this event, the Johannine Jesus journeys first to Capernaum (2:12), and then to Jerusalem (2:13), whereupon he encounters a commercial marketplace in the court of the temple (2:14). At this point, Jesus drives all (πάντας) from the temple court with a whip (2:15), the disciples recall a prophecy (2:17; cf. Ps 69:9), the Jewish antagonists question his authority and look for a sign (2:18), and Jesus responds with authority and a riddle (2:19). The Fourth Evangelist concludes with another remembrance of the disciples (2:21–2) and concluding thoughts about Jesus' works in Jerusalem (2:23–5). Not only does this macro-event warp narrative by emphasizing the temporalities of the temple incident, it reveals many of the temporal mechanics native to all narratives.

As all narratives are temporally continual (Section 2.1.5.5.), the story of the temple incident is a narrative in its own right; it is in fact rather well-formed.¹¹² The incident begins with the temporal marker, μετὰ τοῦτο, from a vague yet finite moment in time (2:12). The Evangelist's use of this temporal marker signals the non-absolute nature of the episode; it is impossible to ascribe a quantity of time to the temporal shift (Section 4.2.2.1.).¹¹³ Therefore, μετὰ τοῦτο opens the narrative into a subsequent temporal dimension,¹¹⁴ and this shift is emphasized by the use of a relatively indefinite temporal process word, “went down” (κατέβη).¹¹⁵ Unless one assumes an absolute temporal configuration, it is impossible to know the origin of the journey; and even if one assumes or knows the origin, it is still impossible to know the precise path or duration of the journey. In other words, it is impossible to discern whether the journey was direct or circuitous, relaxed or labored, extended or truncated.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Having a beginning, middle, end and representative characteristics, as per Aristotle; see Aristotle, *Poetics*, 6–8; also Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 75–6; and Witherington, *John's Wisdom*, 85.

¹¹³ Schlatter, *Evangelist Johannes*, 73; Barrett, *Gospel According to St. John*, 162; and Booth, *Peak Marking Features*, 44.

¹¹⁴ Contra those who claim Jn 2:12 is pointless; see Fortna, *Gospel of Signs*, 39; and C. H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1963), 235.

¹¹⁵ For further discussion of temporal process words, see below in Section 7.2.1.3.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Luther, *Luther's Works*, 22:216; Schlatter, *Evangelist Johannes*, 73; and MacGregor, *Gospel of John*, 56.

The destination of Capernaum is known, however, and once there the narrative reveals that the entourage remained for “not many days” (οὐ πολλὰς ἡμέρας). Unfortunately, the narrative remains nebulous, coupling another process verb with a somewhat unspecified duration. At this point, the narrative inserts a temporal descriptor, “and near was the Passover” (Καὶ ἐγγὺς ἦν τὸ πάσχα), in order to fully depict the significance of the temple incident (2:13). Unlike the temporal marker, this descriptor grounds the temporality of the event into a specific, sacred time while remaining non-indexical. The descriptor is immediately followed by yet another temporal process verb, “went up” (ἀνέβη), charting another journey of imprecise path and duration.¹¹⁷ Again, the text does not reveal particulars of the passage to Jerusalem—only that it was made. For these reasons, it is clear that the macro-event of the temple incident is a non-absolute dimension within the Gospel narrative.

In the temple court, the action proceeds within the present (now) dimension of the text. As the narrative settles into a relatively synchronized pattern, it forms the characteristic Johannine style: simple, brief, and relatively measured.¹¹⁸ Even with the narrative as a self-contained whole, it nonetheless integrates rather seamlessly with the remainder of the Johannine text.¹¹⁹ For example, the descriptive reference to the Passover floods the scene with the light of a defining event and links the actions with its sacred history (2:13).¹²⁰ The narrative also alludes to other, related signs, clarifying gaps in the remainder of the text (2:23).¹²¹ In addition, one of the most powerful bonds the temple incident possesses with the narrative as a whole is the foreshadowing of the death and resurrection (2:19–22).¹²² Finally, the macro-event achieves an

¹¹⁷ Cf. Brodie, *Gospel According to John*, 180; and Haenchen, *John*, 1:182.

¹¹⁸ Kermode, “John,” 450; and contra Helen C. Orchard, *Courting Betrayal: Jesus as Victim in the Gospel of John* (JSNTSup 161; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 64.

¹¹⁹ For example, Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 74; Crossan, *Gospel of Eternal Life*, 59–60; Painter, *Quest for the Messiah*, 158; Tovey, *Narrative Art*, 250; Carson, *Gospel According to John*, 177; Morris, *Gospel*, 190; Köstenberger, *Encountering John*, 77; and contra Fortna, *Gospel of Signs*, 145.

¹²⁰ The narrative uses a colligatory idiom as a historical anachrony to create the link; see Sections 7.2.1.2. and 5.2.2., respectively.

¹²¹ Discontinuities in the event structure are cohered through a completing anachrony; see Sections 7.2.2. and 5.2.2., respectively.

¹²² Emphasized in the consistent and coherent repeating anachrony; see Section 5.2.2.

integrated balance of references to Jesus among the other characters in the Gospel text.¹²³

As the action in the present dimension progresses, the disciples recall an ancient Hebrew prophecy (2:17). However, it is unclear when—in what temporal position—the disciples recall this prophecy, yet their alteration of the prophetic passage from “have consumed” (κατέφαγέν) (Ps 69:9, LXX) to “will consume” (καταφάγεταί) reinforces the present moment of the event.¹²⁴ After the verbal exchange between Jesus and the antagonists, the disciples again recall an event; in this case, the recall and the event both occupy a relative temporal position and a different narrative world from the time of Jesus expelling all from the temple courts.¹²⁵ The memory of the disciples evokes several alternative temporalities: the sacred (past) in the Scripture, the mono-dimensional of the event (now), the post-Resurrection after (future), and the experienced event before (past) (2:17, 22).¹²⁶ As a final note, the key prophetic elements are temporal: Jesus will raise the temple in three days (2:19), while the Jewish antagonists challenge him claiming that building the temple will take forty-six years (2:20).

The macro-event of the temple incident comes to a climax with the revelation that Jesus will be raised from the dead (2:21–2). However, the conclusion is more drawn out, with an element of false closure coming with the future belief of the disciples.¹²⁷ At this point, the reader expects the macro-event to end (2:22b), yet the Evangelist continues to fill in more narrative discontinuities in referencing additional signs (2:23), Jesus entrusting himself to his enemies (2:24), and the role of testimony in

¹²³ For example, the narrative utilizes pronominal anaphora alternating with their primary referential, ‘Jesus,’ to cohere the temple events together with the before and after events without confusing characters; e.g. 2:11 (Jesus), 2:12 (anaphor), 2:13 (Jesus), 2:14 (anaphor), and 2:24 (Jesus), 2:25 (anaphor), 3:1 (anaphor), 3:2 (Jesus); see Section 5.2.3.

¹²⁴ Cf. Witherington, *John’s Wisdom*, 88.

¹²⁵ See Section 7.3.2; cf. Resseguie, *Strange Gospel*, 178.

¹²⁶ Aage Pilgaard, “The Qumran Scrolls and John’s Gospel,” in *New Readings in John: Literary and Theological Perspectives. Essays from the Scandinavian Conference on the Fourth Gospel Århus 1997* (JSNTSup 182; ed. Johannes Nissen and Sigfred Pedersen; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 135; cf. Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 1:121; and Resseguie, *Strange Gospel*, 8.

¹²⁷ Ben Witherington stresses the event “is in fact open-ended, pointing forward to the conclusion of the drama in the death and resurrection of Jesus”—and therefore very similar to the narrative as a whole; see Witherington, *John’s Wisdom*, 85; and Section 3.2.2., respectively.

the narrative (2:25).¹²⁸ Time remains finite as the macro-event reaches its final boundary. In the end, this story warps the narrative in several ways. Within the event, alternative temporalities are evoked to bring meaning and significance to the event, as well as to relate the event to a sacred history and future. Furthermore, this macro-event warps the narrative slightly—as one of the lesser macro-events—by pulling other events into its orbit; the temple incident is reflected on as a potential ‘sign’ following the miracle of Cana, and the resurrection pronouncement overshadows the evening interlude with Nicodemus. Finally, one of the reasons why this macro-event has the ability to warp a narrative is that it possesses the temporal mechanics of a complete narrative, each of which exert a force over the temporality of the event that reaches beyond the temporal edges of the event into the Fourth Gospel.

6.2.1.2. *Event-Like Objects: Temporal Value Words*

While macro-events can warp narrative, there are other narrative objects that are able to warp narrative temporality as well, especially when that narrative is a pre-modern narrative with syntactical economy and limited descriptive or lexical density. One such entity is the *event-like object*—an interval of time that exists below the clausal level and affects narrative temporality in a variety of ways. When narrative construction occurs, event-like objects are packaged into textual clauses allowing for an increasingly complex temporality.¹²⁹ Furthermore, the more frugal the narrative, the greater impact that these small-scale events have on the temporality of that narrative. Given the complexity of language, there are a myriad of potential event-like objects, but we will consider below only those that are related to the Fourth Gospel—relevant types of *temporal value words* and *temporal process words*.

The first type of temporal value word that affects the Fourth Gospel are *temporal modifiers*. These event-like objects temporally qualify or quantify a narrative object, modifying the temporal context of the object.¹³⁰ For example, an ‘old woman’ is a temporally-quantified person and a ‘hoarse man’ is a temporally-qualified person via a before and after context.¹³¹ Due to the sparse nature of the Fourth Gospel, the number

¹²⁸ Cf. Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 75.

¹²⁹ Berman and Slobin, *Relating Events*, 13.

¹³⁰ Cf. Danto, *Narration and Knowledge*, 233.

¹³¹ In this example, the ‘hoarse man’ typifies a time when the person is hoarse, and it refers to a time when the person was not hoarse; while a simple example, it can reveal temporal nuances of key ideas in narrative.

of temporal modifiers is few. The primary modifier of significance in the Gospel is “eternal” (αἰώνιος), found most often contextualizing “life” (ζωή).¹³² With each occurrence in the Fourth Gospel, αἰώνιος warps the meaning of life from the typical finite duration into a perpetual and everlasting existence. This existence stands in stark contrast to the limited and finite interval of time occupied by both life and narrative. Therefore, a complex temporality is engaged: life is converted from finite to infinite.¹³³ Another temporal modifier used in the Fourth Gospel is “living” (ζῶν) (4:10–1), contrasting the stagnation of water over time with an everlasting source.¹³⁴

The second type of temporal value word that possesses the potential to warp and add temporal complexity to a narrative is the *colligatory idiom*. In essence, a colligatory idiom denotes a specific group of events frequently encompassing a broad interval of time,¹³⁵ and often includes tangential events as well; examples include the ‘Great War,’ the ‘Elizabethan period,’ and even the ‘Apollo program.’¹³⁶ Similarly, the Fourth Gospel utilizes several colligatory idioms to package events in its text. Several of these are words with a colligatory function: “wedding” (γάμος) and “festival” (ἐορτή), for example.¹³⁷ More significantly, however, are two colligatory idioms used frequently by the Evangelist: “Passover” (πάσχα) and “Sabbath” (σάββατον).¹³⁸ Each of these colligatory idioms is a temporal interval embedded within an event that will then bend or imbue that event with an alternative temporality. In other words, colligatory terms will often exert a force onto the surrounding event, pulling the event into the temporal context of the colligatory idiom. It is not simply that Jesus performed his first sign in Cana or healed a man with congenital blindness, it is that the sign was during a *wedding* and the healing was on a *Sabbath*—temporalities that shape and define the understanding of the narrative by introducing concepts

¹³² See H. Balz, “αἰώνιος,” *EDNT*, 1:46–8; and Dodd, *Interpretation*, 144–50.

¹³³ Compare Paul’s contrast of “death” (θάνατος) and eternal life in Rom 5:21.

¹³⁴ For further discussion, see Jones, *Symbol of Water*, 110–5.

¹³⁵ Cf. Higdon, *Time and English Fiction*, 17; and Ricoeur, “Narrative Time,” 175.

¹³⁶ In light of the continuous aspect of time, both the ‘American Civil War’ and the ‘Battle of New Market’ function as colligatory idioms.

¹³⁷ See Jn 2:1, 2 and 2:23, 4:45, 5:1, 6:4, 7:2, 8, 10, 11, 14, 37, 11:56, 12:12, 20, 13:1, 13:29 respectively; other examples of words with colligatory function include θερισμός in Jn 4:35, ἐγκαίνια in Jn 10:22, and possibly παρασκευή in Jn 19:14, 31, 42.

¹³⁸ Jn 2:13, 23; 6:4; 11:55; 12:1; 13:1; 18:28, 39; 19:14 and Jn 5:9, 10, 16, 18; 7:22, 23; 9:14, 16; 19:31, respectively.

from another time apart from *that* wedding and *that* Sabbath.¹³⁹ In most cases, colligatory idioms cause a narrative pause with the reader as a temporal reference is sought.

The final type of temporal value word that changes the dynamic of the temporalities of the Fourth Gospel is the *temporal referential*. This is a temporal value word that innately references other times and events. For example, most words are atemporal: ‘soldier,’ ‘wit,’ and ‘document’ are neutral in that they do not refer to another time. At the same time, ‘veteran,’ ‘repartee,’ and ‘diploma’ are each synonymous with the former set of words, yet each of the second set express an innate temporal value that references a past event.¹⁴⁰ However, temporally neutral words and temporal referential words are not necessarily associated; a person may be a ‘soldier’ without ever being a ‘veteran.’ Most words with temporal values will refer to before events—it is very rare to find a word that refers to a later (future) event.¹⁴¹ While we can find temporal referential words throughout most languages, their selection, usage and concentration in narrative is what has the potential to warp a narrative.

Due to the low density of narrative configuration and the limited lexical variety, the Fourth Gospel as a whole possesses only a small quantity of temporal referentials—yet the small number belies their profound effect on the narrative temporality of the Gospel. Indeed, this effect is heightened all the more because of the low density, lexical economy, and the absence of most temporal modifiers. In addition, the Gospel uses a rather large number of temporal referential words describing the temporal position of an individual; individually, most of these words occupy a low degree of temporal value.¹⁴² When con-

¹³⁹ It is not unusual that many of the temporal descriptors in the Gospel are also colligatory idioms as well, opening the Gospel to a feeling of historiographical verisimilitude and alternative temporalities.

¹⁴⁰ A ‘veteran’ has fought in some past conflict, ‘repartee’ implies not just wit but the back and forth responses between persons, and a ‘diploma’ is a document which tells of an accomplishment that occurred at a previous time; furthermore, in the case of ‘soldier,’ it is important to note that one could argue that, to a lesser degree, ‘soldier’ does have a temporal value (referencing a training process or organizational association which had already occurred), and that ‘man’ would be the true atemporal word. In this situation, it is often the context of the narrative that will offer the best clue to determine to what degree the word is temporally referring to other times.

¹⁴¹ For a discussion of the phenomenon of past-referring terms, albeit couched in a more positivistic and A-series view of time, see Danto, *Narration and Knowledge*, 73.

¹⁴² For example, “slave” (δοῦλος) in Jn 4:51, 8:34, 35, 13:16, 15:15, 20, 18:10, 18, 26; “murderer” (ἀνθρωποκτόνος) in Jn 8:44; “chief priest” (ἀρχιερεὺς) in Jn 7:32, 45,

sidered as a whole, however, these temporal referential words typify a significant stylistic feature of the Gospel.¹⁴³ In fact, the Fourth Gospel employs one of these positional referentials—“comforter” (παράκλητος) as a before(past)-referring, later(future)-occurring prolepsis.¹⁴⁴ We will explore several of these in greater detail.

“Disciple” (μαθητής) is a positional Johannine temporal value word used throughout the Fourth Gospel to designate an individual changed in time.¹⁴⁵ As with most temporal value words, μαθητής warps the text on the micro-level by packaging an implicit event interval into the narrated event. In order to keep on its geodesic, the narrative never truly describes or explains the missing temporal interval that would have developed discipleship in these individuals.¹⁴⁶ Even while some disciples stay and some go (6:66–9), each of these individuals is defined in reference to a temporal interval in the before (past) rather than any current (present) or later (future) quality or action. Ultimately, these before (past) intervals are insignificant to the Evangelist; the narrative has no time for disciples and packages these characters accordingly.

There is a second, critical positional temporal referential in the Fourth Gospel often appearing as a quasi-duality: the “Father” (πατήρ) and, to

11:47, 49, 51, 57, 12:10, 18:3, 10, 13, 15, 16, 19, 22, 24, 26, 35, 19:6, 15, 21; “mother” (μήτηρ) in Jn 2:1, 3, 5, 12, 3:4, 6:42, 19:25, 26, 27; “prophet” (προφήτης) in Jn 1:21, 23, 25, 45, 4:19, 44, 6:14, 45, 7:40, 52, 8:52, 53, 9:17, 12:38; “brother” (ἀδελφός) in Jn 1:40, 41, 2:12, 6:8, 7:3, 5, 10, 11:2, 19, 21, 23, 32, 20:17, 21:23; “liar” (ψεύστης) in Jn 8:44, 55; “bridegroom” (νυμφίος) in Jn 2:9, 3:29; and quite a few others to an even lesser degree.

¹⁴³ Many of these individuals—identified only by past (before) experiences—are also the ‘anonymous characters’ of the Fourth Gospel; see David R. Beck, *The Discipleship Paradigm: Readers and Anonymous Characters in the Fourth Gospel* (BIS 27; Leiden: Brill, 1997); and cf. Adele Reinhartz, “Why Ask My Name?” *Anonymity and Identity in Biblical Narrative* (New York: Oxford University, 1998).

¹⁴⁴ For example, the unusual use of παράκλητος in Jn 14:16, 26, 15:26, 16:7 by the Evangelist points to both proleptic usage and the existence of multiple narrative worlds; see Section 5.2.2. and 8.2.

¹⁴⁵ See Jn 1:35, 37, 2:2, 11, 12, 17, 22, 3:22, 25, 4:1, 2, 8, 27, 31, 33, 6:3, 8, 12, 16, 22, 24, 60, 61, 66, 7:3, 8:31, 9:2, 27, 28, 11:7, 8, 12, 54, 12:4, 16, 13:5, 22, 23, 35, 15:8, 16:17, 29, 18:1, 2, 15, 16, 17, 19, 25, 19:26, 27, 38, 20:2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 30, 21:1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 12, 14, 20, 23, 24.

¹⁴⁶ Although the text does develop the concept of discipleship through baptism in Jn 4:1–2, following the master in Jn 1:37, believing in the master in Jn 2:11, loving each other in Jn 13:35, bearing “fruit” (καρπός) in Jn 15:8, viewing “signs” (σημεῖον) in Jn 20:30, and being “in the word” (ἐν τῷ λόγῳ) in Jn 8:31, each of which can potentially be applied analeptically to many of these mostly anonymous individuals.

a lesser extent, the “Son” (υἱός).¹⁴⁷ Rather than using temporally neutral words—‘God’ and perhaps ‘man,’ for example—the Gospel chooses words that define a fundamental temporal relationship.¹⁴⁸ The allusion in this relationship is that the birth of the son was an event (1:14, 16:28). In fact, it is impossible to read any of the expository passages of the Gospel that mention this relationship without referencing this temporal interval in the before (past) event. In selecting and emphasizing πατήρ, the narrative distorts all discussion of the relationship back to this previous event: the son is not from Joseph (υἱὸν τοῦ Ἰωσήφ) (4:42/ contra 1:45), the Son is from the Father (ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός) (1:14). In an event in time, the Son has come down from heaven (καταβέβηκα ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ) (6:38). The Fourth Gospel is clear: the Son is from the Father, and this was a temporal, incarnational event continually referenced in the relationship. Ultimately, the narrative’s use of πατήρ and υἱός as event-like objects packages a reference to an incarnational temporality throughout the text. Additional uses of πατήρ and υἱός throughout the text also espouse consequential temporal values.¹⁴⁹

Moving beyond positional temporal referentials, the Fourth Gospel possesses several conventional temporal referentials with broad abilities to warp the temporality of the narrative. The most obvious example is λόγος; we discussed the temporal value of this word in Section 3.1.1. Similar to λόγος is “voice” (φωνή), whose temporally neutral counterpart is perhaps ‘sound.’ In John, a φωνή is that which has been spoken before (past); we hear the φωνή calling from the present (3:29) to both the before (past) (1:23) and the later (future) (5:25, 28).¹⁵⁰ Another notable example is “Christ” (Χριστός), or “Messiah” (Μεσσίας), words

¹⁴⁷ See Jn 1:14, 18, 2:16, 3:35, [4:12], [20], 21, 23, [53], 5:17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 36, 37, 43, 45, 6:27, [31], 32, 37, 40, [42], 44, 45, 46, [49], 57, [58], 65, [7:22], 8:16, 18, 19, 27, 28, 38, [39], 41, 42, [44], 49, [53], 54, [56], 10:15, 17, 18, 25, 29, 30, 32, 36, 37, 38, 11:41, 12:26, 27, 28, 49, 50, 13:1, 3, 14:2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 28, 31, 15:1, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 23, 24, 26, 16:3, 10, 15, 17, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 32, 17:1, 5, 11, 21, 24, 25, 18:11, 20:17, 21; and Jn (1:18), 34, [42], [45], 49, 51, 3:13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 35, 36, [4:5], [12], [46], [47], [50], [53], 5:19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 6:27, 40, [42], 53, 62, 8:28, 35, 36, [9:19], [20], 35, 10:36, 11:4, 27, 12:23, 34, 36, 13:31, 14:13, 17:1, [12], 19:7, [26], 20:31, respectively.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Jeffrey L. Staley, “The Structure of John’s Prologue: Its Implications for the Gospel’s Narrative Structure,” *CBQ* 48:2 (1986): 247; and Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 10.246.

¹⁴⁹ For example, the temporal interval represented by the forefathers of the Jews in Jn 4:20, 6:31, 49, 58, 7:22, and 8:44.

¹⁵⁰ See Jn 1:23, [3:8], 29, 5:25, 28, 37, 10:3, 4, 5, 16, 10:27, [11:43], 12:28, 30, 18:37.

imbued with centuries of temporal value embedded as it is in an ancient Christian narrative.¹⁵¹ Each use of these words in the text reference not only events in Jewish history, but also sacred temporalities brought to the text by the understanding of the individual reader. Furthermore, every use of these words elicits a pause in the text where an alternative temporality is forced into the text for consideration: have we (now) found the Christ (defined by events in a before (past) interval (7:27, 42, 12:34) (1:41, 4:29, 7:26)?

A final example of a prevalent—and perhaps most focal to the temporal mechanics—temporal value word in the Fourth Gospel is “witness” (μαρτύριον).¹⁵² ‘Witness’ is a word with a strong temporal value; it connects a concrete before (past) event with its implications in the present and after (future) events. A witness is given on behalf of a before (past) event that has been experienced or seen (1:34, 3:11, 32); multiple witnesses may be needed to validate the event (8:17–8). The use of the event-like object μαρτύριον in the Fourth Gospel warps the narrative on several levels. On the individual event level, μαρτύριον packages an indeterminate temporal event into the event at hand. Furthermore, with each occurrence, μαρτύριον references and associates events from the various temporal dimensions of the Gospel into an amassed witness event. Finally, μαρτύριον draws a thematic geodesic through the text that cuts across the various temporalities (cf. 18:37): epic (1:7), before (past) (1:19, 3:28), mono-dimensional (now) (4:39, 12:17), after (future) (15:26), multi-dimensional (positional) (19:35, 21:24), and eternal (5:31–40). We will explore the Johannine concept of μαρτύριον in more detail in Chapter 7.

6.2.1.3. *Event-Like Objects: Temporal Process Words*

The second type of event-like objects that warp the narrative of the Fourth Gospel is *temporal process words*. Similar to temporal value words, temporal process words embed an alternative, underlying temporality into the event and/or clause into which they are packaged. Unlike temporal value words, temporal process words usually connote a temporal

¹⁵¹ See Jn 1:17, 20, 25, 41, 3:28, 4:25, 29, 7:26, 27, 31, 41, 42, 9:22, 10:24, 11:27, 12:34, 17:3, 20:31 and Jn 1:41, 4:25, respectively.

¹⁵² See Jn 1:7, 19, 3:11, 32, 33, 5:31, 32, 34, 36, 8:13, 14, 17, 19:35, 21:24; plus all of the verb cognates such as 1:7, 8, 15, 32, 34, 2:25, 3:11, 26, 28, 32, 4:39, 44, 5:31, 32, 33, 36, 37, 39, 7:7, 8:13, 14, 18, 10:25, 12:17, 13:21, 15:26, 27, 18:23, 37, 19:35, 21:24.

sequence (or summary) of events rather than a specific interval or event. In other words, temporal process words are usually verbs. These temporal process words denote an action in the time of the narrative and promote their temporality contextually.¹⁵³ Therefore, the degree of distortion is determined by both the word used and the context within the event. For this reason, some temporal process words will often differ in temporal value from one event, or one narrative, to the next. A few will always possess a high degree of temporal process. Finally, temporal process verbs will vary slightly in degree over cultures and reading practices. While there are several types of temporal process words, we will examine two types that warp the Fourth Gospel.

The first type of temporal process word that can warp the narrative configuration of the Fourth Gospel is the *minimum interval verb*.¹⁵⁴ Remembering that narrative and time are not atomistic but continual in nature, there are nonetheless verbs that attempt to convey an ‘instantaneous’ action or sequence—or, in other words, a minimum interval of time. An example of a minimum interval verb is ‘graduate’: one graduates from a school only after one works, studies and tests. While the working, the studying and the testing comprise events of various lengths, the actual act of ‘graduating’ is an ephemeral and fleeting moment of time. In this respect, minimum interval verbs occupy no easily quantifiable time. These words are rare in the Fourth Gospel; there are perhaps only four with any degree of temporal process distortion.

The most common example of a minimum interval verb in the Fourth Gospel is “glorify” (δοξάζω).¹⁵⁵ While in some narrative contexts δοξάζω could be used as an action with a more quantifiable temporal interval, the Evangelist uses δοξάζω to express an atemporal quality

¹⁵³ In contrast, many studies of narrative assume tense is the sole or most important indicator of time for verbs and their clauses; however, while scholars have studied the tense of various verbs in many narratives, tense ultimately has very limited potential to explicate narrative temporality—thinkers have debated this argument and we will not fully solve it here; see Fludernik, “Chronology,” 121; Danto, *Narration and Knowledge*, 54; cf. Ronen, *Possible Worlds*, 221–6; Peter Ludlow, *Semantics, Tense, and Time: An Essay in the Metaphysics of Natural Language* (Cambridge: MIT, 1999), 120; and contra Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 2:76; Goldfajn, *Word Order and Time*, 5; Frey, *Eschatologie II*, 58ff.; and Severino Pancaro, “A Statistical Approach to the Concept of Time and Eschatology in the Fourth Gospel,” *Biblica* 50:4 (1969): 512.

¹⁵⁴ Sometimes referred to as an ‘achievement’ verb; see Danto, *Narration and Knowledge*, 84–5.

¹⁵⁵ See Jn 7:39, 8:54, 11:4, 12:16, 23, 28, 13:31, 32, 14:13, 15:8, 16:14, 17:1, 4, 5, 10, 21:19.

placed on the Son by the Father (8:54), and on the Father by the Son (17:4). According to the Evangelist, there is a time for *δοξάζω* (7:39, 12:16), but that time is not even an “hour” (*ώρα*) (12:23–8, 17:1),¹⁵⁶ but a moment, a “now” (*νῦν*) (13:31, 17:5), an “at once” (*εὐθέως*) (13:32). The achievement of glory is never truly defined in the Fourth Gospel, but one manner in which it warps the text is by cutting across multiple dimensional temporalities: *δοξάζω* is epic (1:14), mono-dimensional (now) (12:23, 13:31), multi-dimensional (positional) (12:16), relative (17:1), after (future) (7:39, 21:19), and eternal (17:5). By narrating a minimal interval, this type of temporal process word bends the narrative to completion. Two more examples of minimum interval verb usage in the Fourth Gospel are “I have overcome” (*ἐγὼ νενίκηκα*) (16:33) and “it is finished” (*Τετέλεσται*) (19:30). In both cases, the narrative packages these event-like objects into their respective event configurations, warping the event by propelling the narrative toward a sense of closure and a new event or dimension of time. A final example of a minimum interval verb in the Fourth Gospel is the uniquely Johannine usage of “I am” (*ἐγὼ εἰμί*) (8:58), imbued with not only a temporality but also an entire cosmology, which we will plumb in greater depth below.

The second type of temporal process word that distorts the narrative of the Fourth Gospel is the *process verb*.¹⁵⁷ Similar to the minimum interval verb, we can define the process verb in relation to the interval or process it describes. In narrative, process verbs depict and summarize countless events into one temporal and verbal sequence; the summarization is relative to the synchronization and context of the actions. As an example, the words ‘touch,’ ‘walk,’ and ‘evolve’ differ in temporal process. ‘Touch’ is a verb with very limited temporal process potential; in most contexts, it is a limited and distinct action. At the same time, ‘walk’ is a verb that entails a distinguishable temporal process, but the word’s general context is synchronized with a standard magnitude,¹⁵⁸ and therefore in most cases is of little temporal value. In contrast to the previous two words, the process verb ‘evolve’ usually paints a broad

¹⁵⁶ At least in most English usage; *ώρα* is quite capable of metaphorically meaning ‘now’ or ‘moment,’ even in this context; cf. Schnackenburg, *Gospel According to John*, 2:383; Godet, *Commentary*, 780; Carson, *Gospel According to John*, 437; and Jn 4:23, 5:25, 12:27, 31.

¹⁵⁷ Otherwise known in the more limited sense as ‘project’ verbs; see Danto, *Narration and Knowledge*, 165; and Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 1:146.

¹⁵⁸ See the earlier discussion of the standardization of event synchronization in Section 7.2.1.

range of events and temporalities with one, simple stroke. While all verbs convey action and therefore some degree of time,¹⁵⁹ verbs such as ‘evolve’ can warp a narrative by condensing a vast number of events into vivid and discernible temporalities without affecting narrative coherence or progression.¹⁶⁰ Process verbs can be either definite or indefinite, depending on narrative context. The Fourth Gospel employs a number of temporal process verbs that distort the narrative and promote a non-absolute temporal configuration.¹⁶¹

Similar to most narratives, the Fourth Gospel employs multiple, typical temporal process verbs that keep the narrative on its geodesic.¹⁶² Most of these words tend to define a definite temporal interval. At the same time, the narrative uses several process verbs to impact greatly the temporality of the text, the majority of which are more indefinite in nature. A classic example of a temporal process word in the Fourth Gospel is “tabernacled” (σκηνώω) (1:14), a word that defines the whole sacred, temporal dimension of the incarnation. A related but rather peculiar example is the textual usage of “remain” (μένω),¹⁶³ a verb that relates a potentially lengthy but indefinite period of times and events. What is more, the Gospel employs μένω to convey several variant temporalities: a relatively definite time of lingering (4:40, 11:6), a relatively indefinite yet not extensive time (10:40, 11:54), an after (future) time (21:22–3), and a sacred and everlasting time (14:10). There is a bit of temporal irony with μένω in that the verb functions as a temporal process verb yet is often articulating an atemporal quality rather than a condensed temporal sequence.¹⁶⁴ For these reasons, μένω can warp the narrative in two different ways—condensing lengthy temporal intervals and expanding atemporal qualities—dependent on context.

Perhaps the most striking examples of temporal process words in the Fourth Gospel depict the process of journeys. While the Evangelist enlists several different verbs in a variety of fashions, such as καταβαίνω

¹⁵⁹ Gérard Genette, “Boundaries of Narrative” (trans. Ann Levenas), *NLH* 8:1 (1976): 6.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Shen, “Defense and Challenge,” 226; Zwaan, “Five Dimensions,” 96; and Danto, *Narration and Knowledge*, 161–5.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 1:146.

¹⁶² For example, the phrase κατέβησαν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν (6:16) narrates a vague but definite temporal interval, typical for narratives similar to the Gospel; other examples include 1:19, 5:16, 6:3, 7:14, and 19:17.

¹⁶³ See Jn 1:32, 33, 38, 39, 2:12, 3:22, 36, 4:40, 5:38, 6:27, 56, 7:9, 8:31, 35, 9:41, 10:40, 11:6, 54, 12:24, 34, 46, 14:10, 17, 25, 15:4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 16, 19:31, 21:22, 23.

¹⁶⁴ For atemporal qualities, see Jn 1:32–3, 3:36, 5:8, 9:41, 14:10, 17, 15:7, 9–10.

and ἀπέρχομαι, there are generally two types of temporal journeys in the Gospel: the sacred descent/ascent of Jesus from heaven and the non-absolute earthbound wanderings of Jesus and the disciples.¹⁶⁵ In the sacred descent/ascent journeys, the Johannine Jesus crosses temporalities and distorts the narrative with an incredibly vague process. Even if limited to the incarnation, the descending journey of Jesus from heaven warps the narrative away from any consideration of these events (except as undertaken by potential readers). This journey depicts an event(s) in multiple temporalities, including eternal (positional) (3:31, 6:51) and mono-dimensional or relative (now) (4:25, 6:14, 11:27).

The descriptions of the earthbound journeys are more tangible but only slightly less vague. While they perform several functions, these temporal process verbs help shape the temporal configuration of the Fourth Gospel. Each of these words is used to describe a process, but a process that is ultimately undefined. As I demonstrated in Section 4.2.1., modern readers often implicitly assume a biblical journey fits a modern parallel; but ancient narratives were not defined by absolute coordinates from beginning to end. As an example, when Jesus “went down to Capernaum” (κατέβη εἰς Καφαρναούμ) (2:12), there are no absolute temporal coordinates to determine the length of the journey, or a description with which to even estimate.¹⁶⁶ In fact, if we do not assume an absolute configuration, it is impossible to know exactly where Jesus was coming from and the length and details of the journey.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, in many cases in the Fourth Gospel, indefinite temporal process verbs accompany temporal markers emphasizing the dimensional and warped nature of the Gospel and unintentionally exasperating the modern reader.¹⁶⁸ In the end, these process verbs actively warp the dimensional configuration of the Gospel.

¹⁶⁵ For examples, see Jn 1:6, 2:12, 3:31, 4:4, 25, 43, 5:1, 6:1, 14, 33, 37, 38, 41, 42, 50, 51, 58, 7:8, 10, 52, 10:40, 11:7, 15, 16, 27, [45], 54, [12:20], 27, 36, 13:1, 3, 31, 14:3, 6, 18, 28, 16:5, 7, 8, 17, 27, 28, 32, 17:8, 11, and perhaps 21:1.

¹⁶⁶ Luther, *Luther's Works*, 22:216.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Witherington, *John's Wisdom*, 80; and Fortna, *Predecessor*, 59.

¹⁶⁸ For example, the key temporal marker μετὰ ταῦτα and its cognates are coupled with some type of temporal process verb in 2:12, 3:22, 5:1, 6:1, 7:1, 11:7, 19:28, and 21:1; only 5:14, 11:11 and 19:38 appear to have conventional verbs—yet one explanation is that each of these three are the second of these type markers in very brief narrative sequence (5:1/14, 11:7/11, and 19:28/38). The verbs used in 7:1, 19:28, and 21:1 are not those discussed above, but they do exhibit non-absolute temporal processes.

CASE STUDY—Temporal Process Words—John 16:28

Perhaps the most extraordinary use of temporal process words in narrative occurs in John 16:28—wherein the Evangelist harnesses four different verbs in two short clauses to convey a specialized temporal process to the narrative.¹⁶⁹ In this verse, the narrative describes four journeys undertaken by the Johannine Jesus: he has “come forth” (ἐξέρχομαι) from the Father, he has “come” (ἔρχομαι) into the world, yet he “leaves” (ἀφίημι) the world and he “goes” (πορεύομαι) to the Father. To a certain degree, these clauses summarize the journeys of the Son,¹⁷⁰ but at the same time underscore a variety of temporalities within the Fourth Gospel. One clear indication of this is the emphasis on four different verbs that generally convey similar meanings. Another is the parallel format of the dual clauses.¹⁷¹ As a result, these clauses neatly and succinctly knit together four different process intervals described in the Gospel narrative.¹⁷²

In the first clause, ἐξέρχομαι covers the event interval depicting the ‘origin’ of the Son from the Father. The Johannine Jesus uses a vague temporal process verb to align this origination with the descent-ascent/journey motif in the narrative; in doing so, the ἐξέρχομαι usage appears to allude to a movement in time. However, ἐξέρχομαι also connotes an appearance from a point of origin.¹⁷³ As a result, the narrative connects the coming forth of the Son to the epic prologue of the Gospel.¹⁷⁴ In a finite universe, and one in which the Son is unbounded by creation, the ἐξέρχομαι from the Father is a positional ‘journey’ prior to the creation (1:2, cf. 8:23; Section 3.1.1.). Moreover, at the moment of creation, the positional ἐξέρχομαι of the Son becomes an epic eruption into the now

¹⁶⁹ The close proximity and semantic usage of these words, an unusual phenomenon in modern narratives, is found in several other places in John; for example 7:8/10, 12:28, 13:32, 14:3, 15:4, 7, 10, 16:7.

¹⁷⁰ Carson, *Gospel According to John*, 547; Reinhartz, *Word in the World*, 78; Laney, *John*, 296; and contra Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 589.

¹⁷¹ Wikenhauser, *Evangelium*, 300; Dodd, *Interpretation*, 349; and cf. Schnackenburg, *Gospel According to John*, 3:163.

¹⁷² Siegfried Schulz explicitly recognizes this idea as well: “Jesus ist vom Vater ausgegangen (= Präexistenz) und in die Welt gekommen (= Menschwerdung), und er verläßt wieder die Welt (= Kreuzestod und Auferstehung) und kehrt zum Vater zurück (= seine endgültige Verherrlichung)”; see Schulz, *Evangelium*, 208; and cf. Kysar, *John*, 252–3.

¹⁷³ W. Schenk, “ἐξέρχομαι,” *EDNT*, 2:4; and “ἐξέρχομαι,” *BDAG*, 347–8.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. Reinhartz, *Word in the World*, 19.

temporal creation (1:3).¹⁷⁵ The use of this process verb points to two distinct temporalities, one directly and one implicitly: the atemporal position of God before the creation (epic), and the transit of the Son ‘into’ creation (past). The second temporal process verb in the first clause, ἔρχομαι,¹⁷⁶ is equally broad in temporality but often defined by its sacred, epiphanic and Christological nuances.¹⁷⁷ In this case, there is a specific event interval that is being referenced: the incarnation of the Son (1:14, 6:38). Similar to the first temporal process verb in this clause, the ἔρχομαι does nothing to explain the mystery of the coming of the Son into the world. This verb warps the text by confronting the reader with three alternative temporalities: the position of the Son with the Father (epic), the incarnation event itself (past), and the Messianic/epiphanic quality of the Son in the world (now).

In the second clause, the third temporal process word occurs: ἀφίημι.¹⁷⁸ Separated by “yet” (πάλιν),¹⁷⁹ this second parallel clause completes the temporal circuit by depicting the events in the after (future) of the narrative’s current temporal position.¹⁸⁰ Similar to the first two, ἀφίημι is a vague temporal process word; only the point of origin is given. The temporal interval described by the ἀφίημι is the δοξάζω of Jesus—the macro-event that warps the Gospel as whole. Therefore, this process verb is the most clear of the four, tying the journey to an event most fully understood by the reader: the passage back to the Father comes only through the cross (6:51, 8:28, 10:17–8, 11:50–2, 18:11). While this process is locatable in a dimension (now) narrated by the Gospel, it opens the door to after (future) temporalities.¹⁸¹ This door opened is πορεύομαι, as Jesus must journey back to the

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Schenk, *EDNT*, 2:4.

¹⁷⁶ I am basing my discussion on the preferred rendering of the text; for issues of textual variance see Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 457; and Barrett, *Gospel According to St. John*, 414.

¹⁷⁷ T. Schramm, “ἔρχομαι,” *EDNT*, 2:55–7; and cf. Schneider, “ἔρχομαι,” *TDNT*, 2:671–4; and “ἔρχομαι,” *BDAG*, 394.

¹⁷⁸ Without debating the usefulness of verbs tenses (see above), it is nonetheless interesting to note that the temporal process verbs in the first clause are of a kind (aorist and perfect), and the tenses from the second clause are of another (present).

¹⁷⁹ While readers traditionally translate πάλιν as ‘again,’ the word also carries a strong connotation of ‘back’ when coupled with a temporal process verb (such as the ones in Jn 16:28); see “πάλιν,” *BDAG*, 752.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Reinhartz, *Word in the World*, 19.

¹⁸¹ John Calvin argues that “notatur virtutis perpetuitas [emphasis mine]”; see John Calvin, *In Evangelium Secundum Johannem Commentarius Pars Altera* (ed. Helmut Feld; Opera Exegetica 11:2; Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1998), 204; see also Black, “‘Words that You

Father (13:1, 14:2). The temporal interval which πορεύομαι describes begins in the Fourth Gospel and continues into an indiscernible after-time (future). It is remarkably complex with temporal nuances of the events of ascension, dwelling with the father, and the return of the triumphant Christ,¹⁸² each of which warps the narrative by projecting future, utopian events into the textual context. In the end, there is an element of temporal irony in these two clauses; after Jesus speaks, the disciples appear pleased that the Messiah is now speaking plainly (16:29).¹⁸³ Yet due to the Evangelist's use of vague temporal process verbs to articulate four divine events, the words of the Johannine Jesus are anything but simple.

6.2.2. *The Function of Temporal Discontinuities*

Contrary to the rich temporal meaning, configuration, and distortive power ensconced in the Fourth Gospel, we have seen that the narrative itself is limited in events comparative to modern narratives. In the previous sections, I demonstrated that the event structure of the Fourth Gospel is non-dense and therefore atypical of most modern narratives (Section 5.3. and 7.2.1.1.). This lack of comparable density of events in the text—coupled with a dimensional configuration and the usage of event-like objects—leads to an amount of temporal discontinuity, which in turn leads to conflict with the assumptions of modern readers.¹⁸⁴ The hallmark of modern thought is that narratives are to be event-laden and temporally-continuous.¹⁸⁵ The hallmark of the Fourth Gospel is that it is event-sparse and temporally-heterogeneous. Nonetheless, events we experience in the passing of life in the physical world are innately discontinuous, as they are in narratives not absolutely configured.¹⁸⁶ Given their mimetic nature, narratives are no different: all narratives possess some degree of discontinuity between the edges of their events.

Gave," 228–9; Witherington, *John's Wisdom*, 266; and contra Rudolf Bultmann who argues the event does not exist in our present reality (*Dasein*); see Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 589.

¹⁸² Hauck/Schulz, "πορεύομαι," *TDNT*, 6:573–8.

¹⁸³ Luther, *Luther's Works*, 24:408.

¹⁸⁴ White, "Value," 9; Chaudhuri, "Undivided Time," 28; and Daniel Javitch, "Narrative Discontinuity in the *Orlando Furioso* and its Sixteenth Century Critics," *MLN* 103:1 (1988): 73.

¹⁸⁵ Louis O. Mink, "Everyman His or Her Own Annalist," in *On Narrative* (ed. W. J. T. Mitchell; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1981), 234.

¹⁸⁶ Dastur, "Phenomenology of the Event," 179f.; and Trussler, "Suspended Narratives," 559.

One of the assumptions of modernity is that narratives can and should be continuous; when discontinuity does appear, modern readers reject it as an inferior form of temporality. However, all narratives are finite and therefore omit events.¹⁸⁷ In fact, even the most dense, modern narratives represent only minute temporalities of all possible times in an entire continuum of related, narratable events.¹⁸⁸ All narratives are lattice-works of limited temporal events—"a dynamic system of gaps."¹⁸⁹ A narrative cannot simply interlock events contiguously with absolute precision due to the fact that events are limited, particular, and susceptible to deformation through decontextualization.¹⁹⁰ Historiographical narratives are often laden with discontinuities due to the sheer complexity of aligning historical events.¹⁹¹

The pre-modern annal perhaps best illustrates this idea: the annalist felt little need to fill in temporal gaps clearly exposed by the linear structure.¹⁹² As a result, it is impossible for even the most absolute, close-knit narrative to be anything more than a network of limited events that appears solid at a distance.¹⁹³ This stands in contrast to the modern ideal for narrative event structure, which led to the implicit assumption that temporally discontinuous, pre-modern narratives are flawed. This positivistic assumption plagues the reading of not only the Fourth Gospel, but also discontinuous works of numerous ancient and medieval writers such as Thucydides,¹⁹⁴ as well as many modern works such as Shakespeare's *Macbeth*¹⁹⁵ and Richard Brautigan's *The Tokyo-Montana Express*.¹⁹⁶

¹⁸⁷ Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 29; Danto, *Narration and Knowledge*, 141; and McGill, "Coherence and Incoherence," 211–2.

¹⁸⁸ However, while narratives mimic temporal continua, individual written texts display an atomistic ontology in their letters and words. What this means on an elementary level is that a continuum of narrative events can never truly be represented, and hence, continuous, in an atomistic world; see Heise, *Chronoschisms*, 62; for a chaos approach, see Reisch, "Chaos, History, and Narrative," 19.

¹⁸⁹ Sternberg, *Expositional Modes*, 50; cf. Ermarth, *Sequel*, 78; and Tovey, *Narrative Art*, 260.

¹⁹⁰ Walsh, "Fabula and Fictionality," 595.

¹⁹¹ McCullagh, "Truth of Historical Narratives," 44; and McGill, "Coherence and Incoherence," 211–2.

¹⁹² White, "Value," 9–11; and Mink, "Everyman," 234.

¹⁹³ P. Bange, "Towards a Pragmatic Analysis of Narratives in Literature" (trans. Harriet Jisa), *Poetics* 15 (1986): 85; Bunzl, "How to Change the Unchanging Past," 181; Danto, *Narration and Knowledge*, 17; and White, "Value," 23.

¹⁹⁴ Ermarth, *Realism*, 15; and Hunter, *Past and Process*, 167.

¹⁹⁵ Danto, *Narration and Knowledge*, 250.

¹⁹⁶ Jeff Crouch, "Discontinuity in Richard Brautigan's *The Tokyo-Montana Express*," *MQ* 33:4 (1992): 394–5.

Previously, I demonstrated that the often scrutinized aporias of the Fourth Gospel may not adversely affect the coherence of the text (Section 5.2.2.), as is the case with most other pre-modern (and some modern) texts. What is more, the innate, deterministic function of narrative, and the usage of event-like objects, endeavors to shroud the network of temporal lacunae found in the narrative event structures of any given text. Therefore, in light of the history and nature of narrative, a redefinition of the use of the word ‘aporia’ in Johannine studies is in order. By jettisoning the absolute and positivistic baggage, critics can use the concept of an aporia more constructively to identify and classify temporal gaps in the event structure of a narrative such as the Fourth Gospel.

In the following discussion of aporias in the Fourth Gospel, I will argue there are two basic types of temporal gaps in narrative: definite and indefinite aporias. *Definite aporias* refer to temporal moments that the narrator simply excluded from a narrative. For example, most narratives, including the Fourth Gospel, do not narrate events that are not a part of the crisis of the plot.¹⁹⁷ As Hegel noted, happiness, security and peace do not make for good historiographical writings.¹⁹⁸ The Fourth Gospel does not reveal the mundane events of the life of Jesus, nor should we truly expect it to reveal them. The existence of definite aporias is essential to a valid comprehension of a narrative—whatever is omitted in an event gap sets textual boundaries and redefines the included events of the narrative.¹⁹⁹ In contrast, *indefinite aporias* are vague gaps in event structure that generally occur between the frayed edges of events and are created as a byproduct of the narrativization process. When the reader attempts to apprehend the *fabula*,²⁰⁰ these frayed edges and indeterminate gaps can interfere.²⁰¹ While both types of temporal aporias will preclude a truly absolute narrative, it is the presence of indefinite temporal discontinuities that exacerbates the difference between ancient, pre-modern texts and modern, positivistic ideals.

¹⁹⁷ White, “Value,” 10.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 11.

¹⁹⁹ Fox, “Uses of Indeterminacy,” 175; and Mikeal C. Parsons, “Christian Origins and Narrative Openings: The Sense of a Beginning in Acts 1–5,” *RevExp* 87:3 (1990): 407.

²⁰⁰ Smith, “Narrative Versions, Narrative Theories,” 226.

²⁰¹ When the interference moves toward a high degree, the probability of narrative determinism takes over and readers will see the narrative as increasingly incoherent and indeterministic.

In light of its economical nature, the Fourth Gospel displays numerous definite temporal discontinuities.²⁰² Little mention is made of the daily aspects of life in the 1st century ANE. Even more, several features of the early Christian testimony about Jesus—such as his role as an exorcist—the Evangelist omits from the pages of the Johannine Gospel. Often, questions raised about these discontinuities have relied on implicit assumptions—such as the assumption that there are a definitive number of signs/actions of Jesus (and all of which are recoverable with the right empirical tools).²⁰³ However, the Fourth Gospel is built with a dimensional configuration—and we remember that the ancient world viewed lives as episodic.²⁰⁴ It is aligned with a relative position—perspective and memory splinters into communicable size.²⁰⁵ It is also determined, warped and restricted, and brought into narratable form (20:30). The result is a narrative that narrates—as an extremely rough estimate—the events of no more than 16 weeks.²⁰⁶ This is in contrast to the typical depiction of the Gospel as comprising three years; a view built upon an absolute implicit assumption of the text (Section 4.1.1). As a result, it is impossible to reconstruct anything of positivistic value from its pages without damaging the text.²⁰⁷ Therefore, like most narratives with a lengthy timeframe, the Fourth Gospel is nearly all discontinuity and very little narrated substance.²⁰⁸ When we approach the aporias of the Gospel from this perspective, they become more comprehensible.

In contrast, indefinite temporal discontinuities are much more difficult to discern; they exist at the fringes of events, within event-like objects, or in alternative temporalities. One reason for this we have previously discussed: events are continual and interstitial, and therefore discontinuities exist not only between events but also in the midst

²⁰² Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 71–2; and Davies, *Rhetoric and Reference*, 47.

²⁰³ For example, Fortna, *Gospel of Signs*, 100–9.

²⁰⁴ Lowenthal, *Past*, 198.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 199.

²⁰⁶ I generated this figure by examining the tempo and approximate length of the macro-events in the Fourth Gospel; this figure excludes the temporal fringes of each event (that which often makes them non-absolute), some of the non-absolute temporal process words, all alternative temporalities, and all temporalities outside the narrative proper (e.g. epic or eternal).

²⁰⁷ Watson, *Jesus and the Jews*, 7; cf. Fox, “Time Out of Mind,” 130; and Fernand Braudel, *On History* (trans. Sarah Matthews; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1980), 11.

²⁰⁸ Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 72; Amos N. Wilder, *Early Christian Rhetoric: The Language of the Gospel* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1971), 21–4; and cf. Casey, *True*, 27.

of events.²⁰⁹ One prime example of an indefinite temporal discontinuity is the temporal marker; these indexicals exist at the opening edge of a dimension and/or event and blur the linked temporalities between events. Another example of indefinite temporal discontinuities comes in the discord between the questions over ‘where Jesus is going’ (13:36 (14:5), 16:5). First, “go” (ὑπάγω) acts in a minor way as an indefinite temporal process verb; the length or details of the going are not defined. Second, the narrative has moved forward in time, and there are stylistic and rhetorical differences between the uses. Last, and most importantly, these verses are discontinuous because they refer to divergent temporalities. In 13:37, the response of Jesus implicitly hints at the fact that Peter believed the ‘going’ to be mono-dimensional (now), an earthbound journey. However, the question from Jesus in 16:5 asks the question from an epic/eternal temporality: he is ascending to Heaven in a journey Peter cannot *now* follow (οὐ δύνασάι μοι νῦν ἀκολουθῆσαι) (13:36). To the Fourth Evangelist, Peter is not asking the same question due to divergent temporalities.

6.3. THE TEMPORAL GEODESIC OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

In Section 2.1.5.5., I introduced the concept of a narrative geodesic—a concept that better clarifies and nuances the temporal direction of an ancient text than modern theories of an absolute narrative teleology. In its classical formulation, a geodesic is the shortest path between two points in curved space.²¹⁰ In considering the geodesic of the Fourth Gospel, we will consider a path through time rather than space. This temporal geodesic will be an incomplete geodesic in light of the finite and restrictive nature of narrative.²¹¹ In other words, the temporal geodesic of the Fourth Gospel is the most succinct movement of time into, through, and out of the text; it is the *recta linea* of Gospel temporality.²¹² Finally, unlike most theorists who argue that we must define narratives by their conclusions,²¹³ I argue that we may define ancient,

²⁰⁹ Danto, *Narration and Knowledge*, 165.

²¹⁰ Heller, “Cosmological Singularity,” 669; and cf. Ushenko, “Principles of Causality,” 91.

²¹¹ Hawking and Penrose, *Nature*, 19.

²¹² Ermarth, *Realism*, 34; and cf. Stibbe, *John’s Gospel*, 38.

²¹³ Ronen, *Possible Worlds*, 168.

historiographical narratives by the warping of their events that create a meaningful geodesic and only secondarily by their conclusions.

The greatest macro-event—the one that exerts the most pull on the rest of the narrative—in the Fourth Gospel is the trial, death, and burial macro-event (3:14–5, 8:28, 12:32). This event is the lynchpin of the Gospel; it is what draws all temporal moments toward.²¹⁴ This is demonstrable from the length, scope, tempo and relative temporal uniformity experienced in this macro-event. Furthermore, this is the event that warps and distorts the remainder of the narrative. Starting from this point, nearby events in the narrative, such as the upper room discourses and the resurrection appearances, orbit and underscore this lifting up of the Son of Man. Moving outward, the second strongest macro-event that warps the narrative is the conclusion (closure function; see Section 3.2.2.). Just as the Father sent the Son, now Jesus sends the disciples to follow him and bear testimony and fruit.²¹⁵ The repetition of false closure invokes an epic outlook to the later (future) work of the disciples.

The third macro-event that exerts the most pull on the temporality of the Fourth Gospel is the network of testimonies distributed through the early episodes of the narrative.²¹⁶ While these events are not built upon an absolute temporal succession, these μαρτύριον are temporal splinters from the signs and people who testify to the Johannine Jesus—interlaced into a determined, causal sequence that explains the move from life to glorification (18:37).²¹⁷ In many ways, these μαρτύριον reflect a variety of temporalities and motifs, and their linearity is only truly found in the

²¹⁴ For example, see Jn 1:50, 2:4, 19–22, 3:14–5, 6:62, 7:6, 8, 33, 8:21, 28, 10:17–8, 11:50–53, 12:16, 23–7, 32, 13:1, 3, 36–8, 17:1, 18:4, 14, 32, 19:7, 28, 36–7, 21:18–9; H. Thyen, “Johannes 10 im Kontext des vierten Evangeliums” (SNTS Seminar Paper; Atlanta: 1986); cf. Collins, *These Things*, 89. This in contrast to the problematic belief that the Lazarus event is the lynchpin; for example, see Lee, *Symbolic Narratives*, 189; and contra Casey, *True*, 208–11.

²¹⁵ For example, see Jn 1:39, 43, 4:38, 6:68, 8:12, 11:16, 12:24, 26, 13:15–17, 36, 14:12, 17–8, 15:5, 16, 26–7, 16:1, 13, 26, 32, 17:11, 18, 20:21, 21:15–9, 22; as well as the use of μένω in John.

²¹⁶ Such as the words of John the Baptist (1:19–23, 29–34, 3:27–36, cf. 5:33), Andrew (1:41–2), Philip (1:45), Nathanael (1:49), the Samaritan woman (4:19, 25, 28–9, 39), the invalid (5:15), Peter (6:68–9), Jesus’ brothers (7:3–4), the crowds (7:31, 40–1, 12:13), the temple guards (7:46), the man born blind (9:11, 15, 17, 25, 30–33), Martha (11:22, 27), Mary (11:32), as well as the signs and words of Jesus (7:7, 8:14, and cf. 5:36, 39, 46, 8:18, 56).

²¹⁷ Similar to *Beowulf* as well as many ancient Greek epic histories such as Xenophon’s *Anabasis*; see Aguirre, “Phasing *Beowulf*,” 367; cf. Brodie, *Gospel According to John*, 576; and Saxby, “Time-Scheme,” 10–1.

forced linearity of the written text.²¹⁸ The final macro-event of importance in forming a temporal geodesic is the creation epic. The Gospel opens with the creation of the world, and the Son who ἐσκήνωσεν with his creation. This epic opening pulls the narrative into context and sets the starting point for the geodesic.

In the end, the temporal geodesic is defined by four key macro-events: creation, testimony, glorification, and the disciple's journey (future). Creation erupts (בָּרָא), and from this the λόγος traverses time and space, and descends from the Father. The epic beginning comes to rest with the μαρτύριον of John the Baptist. The narrative cuts across multiple temporalities to testify to the critical shards and dimensions of the Son of Man: as sign-performer, temple-cleanser, life-giver, and Sabbath-breaker. As these testimonies come a sacred full circle, all of the temporalities and events of the gospel are drawn to the glorification of Jesus. Only in the light of this δόξα can we understand these events, can creation come to completion, and can the disciples complete the journey. The temporal geodesic arcs from the crucifixion, death and burial to the ascent of Jesus—and the ascent of the disciples, who must now find closure by following him to the Father. From the eruption of creation to the temporal shards of the testimony of Jesus to the glory at the crucifixion to the ascent (now) of Jesus and the ascent (future) of the disciples, the temporal geodesic completes the arc from beginning to end.

6.4. AFTERWORD: WARPED

The modern ideal of narrative construction is often one of clear event emplotment, linear configurations, and temporal uniformity. In this chapter, I have demonstrated that the Fourth Gospel is a pre-modern narrative that possesses none of these modern ideals—yet is nonetheless a coherent, meaningful and powerful narrative from the ancient world. The Fourth Gospel comprises a wide array of events, discontinuities and temporalities that determine the narrative's style and semantics. The Gospel also possesses a measured tempo with a feeling of epic progression; unlike modern narratives, it does not encompass creative highs and lows. In addition, the events that comprise the Gospel warp

²¹⁸ Cf. Miel, "Temporal Form," 917; and Smith, "Domain of Tense," 603–4.

the tempo as well as the configuration of the narrative—we can feel the distortion between larger events in the text as well as nuances and glosses within events. In contrast to a linear modern writing style, the Evangelist captures a variety of temporalities through the use of broad, vague or condensing event-like objects. Finally, I demonstrated the Gospel does have a workable and discernible temporal geodesic that moves the narrative to completion.

In this chapter, we saw that narrators build narratives from events, and out of events, and that for most narratives this building process can never truly be simple, linear or uniform.²¹⁹ We began an original discussion into the temporal makeup of the events of the Fourth Gospel, as well as issues of the shaping of narrative temporality, that we could explore further. I also proposed a potential solution to the issue of Johannine aporias—an issue that will continue to require work and study. Due to the complexity of the narrative, I began to ask questions that have not been fully asked or answered, relating to the networking nature of the Gospel.²²⁰ Truly, a narrative is greater than the sum of its parts,²²¹ a fact that is demonstrable when one considers the alternative temporalities used by the Gospel narrative. In the end, one can only define the events of the Fourth Gospel in their whole temporal context.²²²

This chapter opens the door to further research on the configuration and semantics of the temporality of the Gospel. To begin with, a more taxonomic study of the variant temporalities throughout the events and event-like objects may be rewarding. Furthermore, an investigation of the types of discourses, especially indirect discourse, in relation to their temporality could clarify the temporal position of the events as well as embedded temporalities. Especially key would be a psycholinguistic study of the Gospel's usage of backgrounded and foregrounded clauses in its temporal development. Finally, there is the question of the relationship between textual temporality and the temporality of events experienced in narrative configuration by a Jewish person in the ANE; the possibility of an Aramaic original to the Gospel, however slim, would give further insight into the alternative temporalities of events.

²¹⁹ Griffin, "Narrative," 1098.

²²⁰ Bearman and Stovel, "Becoming a Nazi," 71.

²²¹ Crowell, "Mixed Messages," 223; and Allen Tilley, *Plot Snakes and the Dynamics of Narrative Experience* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992), 101–2.

²²² Ricoeur, "Narrative Time," 167.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TIME IS RESTRICTIVE

Time flies like the wind, fruit flies like bananas.

—Groucho Marx

7.1. LIMITS OF NARRATIVE

Readers have long held that a narrative is a window to another world, allowing a glimpse of a different time and place than their own. While recent literary theorists and Biblical critics have come to question this metaphor—and rightfully so with the abuses of positivistic historical criticism—there is still much power and truth in this image; so much so that jettisoning this metaphor would lead to the same methodological obtuseness for narrative criticism that has accompanied much of historical criticism. Perhaps the primary reason that this metaphor leads to discord is that the view through a window into a narrative world is always a *restricted* one. In a narrative such as the Fourth Gospel, these restrictions not only shape the meaning of the world beyond the text, but also the very world itself.

Not only are narratives finite (Section 3.1.) and economical in emplotment and structure, they are also restricted in their very essence and function. In Section 2.2.1.5., I argued that there are several logical restrictions that constrain narratives and their temporal mechanics, just as there are similar restrictions on the temporal mechanics of the actual world (Section 2.1.5.5.). In fact, it is actually the limits on a text that construct a narrative, and it is the restrictions on a narrative that imbue it with meaning.¹ These restrictions are what lead to the myriad variety of narrative types: it is the desire to communicate many shades of meaning while working within narrative parameters that forces narrators to produce atypical narratives with alternative temporalities. In this chapter, I will consider the way the Fourth Gospel overcomes narrative restrictions by using multiple temporal worlds in order to impart its story to the world.

¹ Doležel, “Extensional,” 194.

7.2. POSSIBLE WORLDS

From both a figurative and literal perspective, narratives offer the reader access to another world. Figuratively, this idea is usually used to convey an epistemology of texts, an opening of understanding to something other. Literally, however, a narrative is actually far more of a *Welt* than a *Weltanschauung*.² Indeed, narratives develop and reference an actual world within the text.³ As each of these textual worlds are also temporal worlds,⁴ each are a cosmos complete with its own cosmology and mechanics. We may define a narrative world as a finite, coherent and potential “constellation of spatiotemporally linked elements,”⁵ which is developed by a narrator,⁶ and illuminated referentially by temporal distance. In order to bypass innate restrictions, a narrative may actually develop more than one world, becoming a pluriverse of possible worlds. What is more, it is a differentiation in temporality that will often produce multiple worlds within a text,⁷ as is the case in the Fourth Gospel.

The multiple, possible worlds that comprise narratives are perhaps most visible in the polyphony of voices and the manifold of story arcs.⁸ In contrast to these narrative harmonies, however, possible worlds theory is actually more of a cacophony of theories and metaphors spread out over many disciplines and philosophies. Originating in the works of John Duns Scotus (c. 1265–1308), William of Ockham (c. 1285–1349), and Leibniz, and popularized in the 20th century by the philosopher David Lewis,⁹ possible worlds theory spans the realms of literature, philosophy, aesthetics, logic, science, and linguistics.¹⁰ While most uses of the possible worlds metaphor are ontological or epistemological, I will use this metaphor together with the role of narrative restrictions

² John Barth, *The Friday Book: Essays and Other Nonfiction* (New York: Putnam, 1984), 17.

³ Kermode, *Sense*, 52; Marie-Laure Ryan, “Possible Worlds and Accessibility Relations: A Semantic Typology of Fiction,” *PT* 12:3 (1991): 554–5; and Doležel, “Extensional,” 196.

⁴ Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 1:3.

⁵ Ronen, *Possible Worlds*, 199.

⁶ Lubomír Doležel, “Truth and Authenticity in Narrative,” *PT* 1:3 (1980): 23.

⁷ Ronen, *Possible Worlds*, 199.

⁸ Heise, *Chronoschisms*, 55; Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 16; and Ermarth, *Realism*, 40–1.

⁹ David Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

¹⁰ Ronen, *Possible Worlds*, 47.

to approach the temporal mechanics of narrative from a functional perspective.

In light of the enormous variety of meanings ascribed to the possible worlds theory metaphor, it will be necessary to delineate two aspects of the theory that will affect its usage in this context. First, while possible worlds theory represents a range of ontological positions, most positions fall under the banner of either actualism or possibilism.¹¹ On the one hand, an actualistic line in possible worlds theory holds to the notion that there is more than one real world. One subset of actualism, *modal realism*, argues that there are distinct, parallel worlds with real ontologies,¹² while another subset contends that possible worlds are surplus to the actual world.¹³ On the other hand, possibilism generally limits possible worlds to non-actual, individual states extending from the real world.¹⁴ While thinkers often link actualism with philosophical logic, and possibilism with literary theory, our investigation of the worlds of the Fourth Gospel requires a metaphor with an ontology closer to traditional actualism than the current trend in possibilism due to the historiographical claims of the text.

This follows directly into the second aspect of possible worlds theory: the evolution of *fictional worlds*. Originally contrived to address the logician's debate over truth in fiction, fictional worlds theory is now its own branch of study. As a subset of possible worlds theory, fictional worlds strongly emphasize possibilism along with three key differentials. First, and most significantly, fictional worlds are not real, nor extended from the real, nor are they, in fact, even possible.¹⁵ From this view, fictional worlds are merely constructs of the mind that contain

¹¹ Marie-Laure Ryan, "Possible Worlds in Recent Literary Theory," *Style* 26:4 (1992): 529–30; and Lubomír Doležel, *Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible Worlds* (Baltimore: JHU, 1998), 13.

¹² For example, Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds*, vii; and Heather Dyke, "Real Times and Possible Worlds," in *Questions of Time and Tense* (ed. Robin Le Poidevin; Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 93–5.

¹³ For example, Alvin Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), 44ff; cf. Pléh, "Narrativity," 190.

¹⁴ For example, Nicholas Rescher, "The Ontology of the Possible," in *The Possible and the Actual: Readings in the Metaphysics of Modality* (ed. Michael J. Loux; Ithaca: Cornell, 1979), 166–81; and Doležel, *Heterocosmica*, 16.

¹⁵ Ronen, *Possible Worlds*, 52; and Peter Lamarque, *Fictional Points of View* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1996), 58.

a completely independent ontology.¹⁶ Second, fictional worlds are not abstract or possible categories of the actual world, but rather concrete, imaginative particulars that theorists study in an ontological vacuum.¹⁷ Lastly, fictional worlds exist as limited, indivisible semiotic worlds.¹⁸ In light of this, fictional worlds theory only truly addresses imaginative fiction styles. While most narrative theories are genre-neutral, fictional worlds theory essentially omits all genres between imaginative fiction and historical chronicles,¹⁹ including historiographical works such as the Fourth Gospel.²⁰ Critics in many circles may laud fictional worlds theory for its succinct approach to fiction, but this neatness comes at an expense to narrative theory as whole. Therefore, I will consider the multiple worlds of the Fourth Gospel from a functional approach that affirms its ontological extension with the actual world.

Beyond this, possible worlds theory offers a narrative metaphor that excels at enlivening the conversation over textual referentiality,²¹ a subject simplistically considered in traditional Biblical scholarship.²² In contrast to imaginative fiction, which constructs separate modalities, historiographical works such as the Fourth Gospel refer to possible states constructed from the same and actual modality. For this reason, referential considerations of the Gospel that are based on a correspondence theory of truth, typical in traditional Biblical scholarship,²³ cannot truly solve referential issues raised by historiographical narratives.²⁴ Instead,

¹⁶ Lubomír Doležel, "Mimesis and Possible Worlds," *PT* 9:3 (1988): 484; Ronen, *Possible Worlds*, 8, 18, 87; and cf. Matthias Henze, "The Narrative Frame of Daniel: A Literary Assessment," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 32:1 (2001): 6.

¹⁷ Ronen, *Possible Worlds*, 50, 48, 74.

¹⁸ Eco, *Role of the Reader*, 239; Doležel, "Truth and Authenticity in Narrative," 12; and Ronen, *Possible Worlds*, 52.

¹⁹ Richard Walsh, "Fictionality and Mimesis: Between Narrativity and Fictional Worlds," *Narrative* 11:1 (2003): 113; Ryan, "Possible Worlds and Accessibility Relations," 555; and cf. Rüh, "Battle of Bouvines," 840.

²⁰ Not only historiography, but also true and historical fiction, romantic biography, anticipation narratives, and realistic ahistorical fiction are just a few of the styles that exist between historical chronicles and imaginative fiction.

²¹ Ronen, *Possible Worlds*, 20.

²² Henze, "Narrative Frame of Daniel," 5.

²³ In other words, facts can be extracted from the narrative and are judged true or false, regardless of the means of extraction or the contextual consideration of 'facts.'

²⁴ Louis O. Mink, "Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument," in *The Writing of History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding* (ed. Robert H. Canary and Henry Kozicki; Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1978), 143–4; Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1987), 45; Doležel, "Extensional," 204; and contra Chris Lorenz, "Can Histories be True? Narrativism, Positivism, and the 'Metaphorical Turn,'" *HT* 37:3 (1998): 310.

the possible worlds metaphor opens the door to consider the referentiality of multiple temporal worlds in a historiographical Gospel from a pragmatic and more holistic, semanticized perspective.²⁵

The first step in historiographical referentiality via possible worlds is the *coherence of internal world propositions*. In other words, statements are given initial value based upon their relationship with other statements within a given world, rather than based on an indexical or chosen world (independent of modality).²⁶ In Chapter 5, I demonstrated that the Fourth Gospel is a deterministic narrative, in that it is relatively coherent. This probabilistic argument for coherence is sufficient a base on which to build an exposition on extensional referentiality.²⁷ At the same time, apart from imaginative fiction, historiographical styles of narrative will tend to have propositions that desire to cohere with same-world propositions, as well as relate to actual world propositions.

The second step in historiographical referentiality via possible worlds is the *coherence of trans-world propositions* in the narrative possible world—especially coherence with propositions from the actual world.²⁸ When propositions in a narrative world cohere with the actual world, the narrative forms some degree of semantic relationship with the actual world.²⁹ For example, trans-world identity, or counterpart relations, is a type of trans-world proposition that determines value given to entities spanning multiple worlds.³⁰ An example of this is the naming of existents, or the allocation of reference, meaning and depiction to an individual, across worlds. Unlike imaginative fiction, the Fourth Gospel

²⁵ It is well beyond the scope of this work to consider the details of such an intensive and somewhat contentious epistemology; please see the following works: Hilary Putnam, *Realism and Reason: Philosophical Papers Volume 3* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1983); Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1972); Keith Donnellan, "Reference and Definite Descriptions," *PRV* 75 (1966): 281–304; Alfred Tarski, "The Semantic Conception of Truth and the Foundations of Semantics," *PPR* 4 (1944): 341–375; and Gottlob Frege, "Über Sinn und Bedeutung," *ZPK* 100 (1892): 25–50.

²⁶ For example, when a proposition (P) is possible in the textual possible world (P $\Diamond$ TPW); see Ronen, *Possible Worlds*, 39; and Nelles, *Frameworks*, 71.

²⁷ Although, technically, propositions need not cohere between multiple worlds within one modality (such as is the case with the Fourth Gospel), even though I considered the Gospel as an undifferentiated whole in Chapter 5.

²⁸ In other words, where P $\Diamond$ TPW, so also for the actual world (AW) (P $\Diamond$ AW); see also Theodore Plantinga, *How Memory Shapes Narratives: A Philosophical Essay on Redeeming the Past* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1992), 106.

²⁹ For a discussion of the degrees of relationship, and the impact on genre, see Marie-Laure Ryan, *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1991), 31–9.

³⁰ Ashline, "Impossible Fictions," 222; Ronen, *Possible Worlds*, 57; cf. David Lewis, *Counterfactuals* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1973), 39; and Lewis' later works, though I do not accept his solution.

contains trans-multiple-world existents, creating a web of immense referential complexity.³¹ In the next section, I will focus solely on the multiple narrative worlds within the Fourth Gospel, offering an original approach to the function of intratextual referentiality across these temporal and textual worlds.

7.3. THE POSSIBLE WORLDS OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

One of the most puzzling features of the Fourth Gospel is the blending of divergent temporalities³²—a blending that often seems unusual to the modern reader and is the bane of positivistic critics armed with absolute chronologies and limited truth types.³³ What is more, the temporal mingling of the Gospel occurs not only in the dimensional configuration of the narrative (Section 4.2.), in the discontinuous structure of the narrative (Section 7.2.), and in the temporal displacement of the narrative, but also in the distinct temporal worlds contributing to the development of the Johannine text. Needless to say, the blending of divergent temporalities across textual dimensions and worlds makes for an exceedingly entangled narrative, and one that cannot be stripped for raw data.

As we have seen, the one-dimensional, layer-extracting approach of positivistic historical criticism is insufficient to answer the question of multiple temporalities, whether resulting from displacement, discontinuity or multiple possible worlds. At the same time, many literary-critical approaches to the Fourth Gospel often appear flat by ascribing general homogeneity to the narratorial point of view.³⁴ Therefore, the original solution I propose to this issue is that the Gospel comprises two primary, variant, temporal worlds that function as a conflation across the diegetic organization of the text. These two temporal worlds exist in distinct temporalities yet intersect in the Gospel narrative. I will make

³¹ For example, the ‘historical Jesus’; furthermore, this web often results in an uncritical and simplistic approach to an “individuation function” to an existent across worlds; see Hintikka, *Intentions of Intentionality*, 30.

³² Brodie, *Gospel According to John*, 23; Martin, “Lazarus,” 335; and cf. Hooker, *Beginnings*, 76.

³³ Ryan, *Possible Worlds*, 32.

³⁴ A frequent trend in contemporary Johannine scholarship is to use the idea of the ‘narrator’ or ‘point of view’ in an all-inclusive, homogeneous manner—this concern has been raised to a certain degree by James Resseguie and Derek Tovey; see Resseguie, *Strange Gospel*, 3; and Tovey, *Narrative Art*, 138–143, respectively.

the case that 'two-level' motifs, often applied to the Fourth Gospel,³⁵ are rooted first and foremost in the mingling of these two temporal worlds. Finally, any attempt to understand these two worlds becomes an issue of referentiality, rather than one of layering or leveling the text.

The two temporal worlds in the Fourth Gospel are most visible at their points of conflation; notably, in the relationship and interaction between the two separate diegeses within the narrative.³⁶ We may simply define *diegesis* as a story that either frames or embeds within a narrative; most narratives with any complexity contain multiple diegeses.³⁷ In fact, diegetic organization is one of the universal hallmarks of narrative configuration and general narrativity of a text.³⁸ While the ubiquity of diegeses in narrative prohibits consensus on usage and meaning,³⁹ examples of narrative framing and embedding are most visible when there is a change or adaptation in the narrator.⁴⁰ At first glance, the notion of a narrative 'frame,' 'level,' or 'embed' may appear to use spatial imagery borrowed from the art world, but the diegetic configuration of narrative is actually differentiated across temporalities rather than

³⁵ For example, see J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (revised ed.; Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), 15–21; Tobias Hägerland, "John's Gospel: A Two-Level Drama?" *JSNT* 25:3 (2003): 309–322; Robert Kysar, *John, the Maverick Gospel* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1976), 47–64; Jo-Ann A. Brant, "Divine Birth and Apparent Parents: The Plot of the Fourth Gospel," in *Ancient Fiction and Early Christian Narrative* (SBLSymS 6; ed. Ronald F. Hock, J. Bradley Chance, and Judith Perkins; Atlanta: Scholars, 1998), 201; Gail R. O'Day, "Toward a Narrative-Critical Study of John," *Interpretation* 49:4 (1995): 344; René Kieffer, "Different Levels in Johannine Imagery," in *Aspects on the Johannine Literature: Papers Presented at a Conference of Scandinavian New Testament Exegetes at Uppsala, June 16–19, 1986* (ed. Lars Hartman and Birger Olsson; ConBNT 18; Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1987); and cf. Andrew T. Lincoln, "Trials, Plots, and the Narrative of the Fourth Gospel," *JSNT* 56:4 (1994): 19.

³⁶ In Section 5.2.1., I briefly introduced the concept of diegesis in narrative to build an argument for a deterministic Fourth Gospel, and here I will expand on the role of diegetic configuration in temporal mechanics.

³⁷ William Nelles, "Stories within Stories: Narrative Levels and Embedded Narrative," in *Narrative Dynamics: Essays on Time, Plot, Closure, and Frames* (ed. Brian Richardson; Columbus: OSU, 2002), 350.

³⁸ Nelles, *Frameworks*, 1; Patrick O'Neill, *Fictions of Discourse: Reading Narrative Theory* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1994), 65–6; and James J. Paxson, "Revisiting the Deconstruction of Narratology: Master Tropes of Narrative Embedding and Symmetry," *Style* 35:1 (2001): 130.

³⁹ Especially when working with historiography; see Nelles, *Frameworks*, 1; cf. Cohn, "Signposts of Fictionality," 787; and Füredi, "A Structural Model," 745.

⁴⁰ Nelles, "Stories within Stories," 347.

spaces.⁴¹ Each narrative diegesis can function as an individual world within the text, with its own distinct ontology and temporality.⁴² As a result, I will examine the function of the two primary diegetic tales in the Fourth Gospel in light of the temporal mechanics of a possible worlds metaphor.⁴³

Most narratives contain more than one diegesis; but beyond this, there are narratives where the magnitude of the diegetic organization makes each diegesis appear world-like. When this occurs, it is common to hear modern critics speak of layers, levels or redactions—but the reality is more often than not in the multi-world construction of the text rather than in hypothetical levels.⁴⁴ Indeed, one of the most common constructions of narratives with multiple, primary worlds are those which use a framing narrative (diegesis) to tell the story of an embedded narrative (diegesis). Perhaps the most famous framed narrative is the medieval *Arabian Nights*, a narrative that, from a simple perspective, has an actual world and a set of possible worlds embedded as stories (diegeses). Furthermore, many other medieval narratives possess a diegetic organization that encompasses framed worlds: *Canterbury Tales*,⁴⁵ Giovanni Boccaccio's (1313–1375) *Decameron*, Miguel de Cervantes' (1547–1616) *Don Quixote de la Mancha*,⁴⁶ as well as much of early French literature.⁴⁷ Many modern and postmodern narratives have also used world-like frames and embeds in a variety of ways.⁴⁸

⁴¹ Ryan, *Possible Worlds*, 178; and contra Christine Brooke-Rose, *A Rhetoric of the Unreal: Studies in Narrative and Structure, Especially of the Fantastic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1981), 333.

⁴² Ronen, *Possible Worlds*, 39; Brian McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction* (New York: Methuen, 1987), 113; McGlothlin, "No Time Like the Present," 184; and Uspensky, *Poetics*, 137f.

⁴³ For clarity, we can distinguish a diegesis from a possible world in several ways: a) a diegesis is limited to narratives whereas a possible world is not; b) a diegesis may be clearly defined in a text whereas a possible world cannot (at least lexically or syntactically); and c) a diegesis may not always be—though it usually is—a possible world in every narrative, whereas every possible world in a narrative is not always represented diegetically.

⁴⁴ Gribble, "Interventions," 41.

⁴⁵ Cf. Nelles, *Frameworks*, 2; and Paxson, "Revisiting the Deconstruction of Narratology," 126.

⁴⁶ Fajardo, "Frame," 3.

⁴⁷ Lisa Neal and Steven Rendall, "Polyphonic Narrative in Early Modern France: A Question of Literary History," *RRv* 87:3 (1996): 297.

⁴⁸ For example, Sir Walter Scott's *The Heart of Midlothian*, as well as the works of Honoré de Balzac, Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, and many, many more.

Due to the popularity of framing narratives in the medieval period, it would be easy to assume that these types of narrative worlds originated during that period. On the contrary, while (extant) Greek and Roman authors of antiquity never completely use a full frame motif—though Apollonius' (c. 295–c. 230 BC) *Argonautica* employs a limited frame⁴⁹—many do use diegetic organization to develop multiple temporal worlds. One of the most obvious examples is Homer's *Odyssey*.⁵⁰ In fact, the ancient world is full of examples of narratives with multiple diegeses that pave the way for more formal framed narratives: the works of Herodotus,⁵¹ Thucydides, Aristophanes (c. 450–c. 385 BC),⁵² Virgil,⁵³ and Heliodorus,⁵⁴ as well as the book of Daniel,⁵⁵ Baruch, the Gospel of Luke, and the Gospel of Thomas. From Herodotus to Cervantes, the multiple, framed diegetic world is a common narrative structure, and one that we find in the Fourth Gospel.

Laying aside more Structuralist delineations,⁵⁶ there are several basic functions of diegetic configurations that impact framed, multiple worlds. First, as I demonstrated in 5.2.1., diegeses provide coherence across frames or worlds, and one diegesis will often sustain the other.⁵⁷ Second, one of the diegeses, usually the frame world, can develop a motif that envelops and unlocks the structure and meaning of the other possible worlds.⁵⁸ Last, the narrator often employs the frame world to emphasize the mimetic and/or historiographical claims of the narrative (no matter the genre).⁵⁹ Of course, these functions are most clear when worlds remain distinct in narrative; yet, they can still be glimpsed even in narratives such as the Fourth Gospel which contain partial and conflated

⁴⁹ Mary Margolies DeForest, *Apollonius' Argonautica: A Callimachean Epic* (Mnemosyne Supplements 142; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 70–85.

⁵⁰ Katharine Gittes, "The *Canterbury Tales* and the Arabic Frame Tradition," *PMLA* 98:2 (1983): 238; Henry Barrett Hinckley, "The Framing-Tale," *MLN* 49:2 (1934): 74; René Nünlist, "The Homeric Scholia on Focalization," *Mnemosyne* 56:1 (2003): 62; and Grace M. Ledbetter, *Poetics before Plato: Interpretation and Authority in Early Greek Theories of Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2003), 20–2.

⁵¹ Cf. Dillery, "Reconfiguring the Past," 241.

⁵² Cf. Gribble, "Interventions," 41, 50.

⁵³ Most specifically, the *Aeneid*; see Nelles, "Stories within Stories," 350.

⁵⁴ Nimis, "Sense of Open-Endedness," 228.

⁵⁵ Henze, "Narrative Frame of Daniel," 5.

⁵⁶ For example, see Bal, *Narratology*, 43–6.

⁵⁷ Füredy, "A Structural Model," 767; Nelles, *Frameworks*, 152; and John T. Matthews, "Framing in Wuthering Heights," *TSLL* 27:1 (1985): 29.

⁵⁸ Matthias Henze argues this is the case in Daniel; see Henze, "Narrative Frame of Daniel," 10.

⁵⁹ Nelles, "Stories within Stories," 348.

worlds that are not easily distinguishable, even when these diegeses act as possible temporal worlds within the narrative. We will now turn to two possible worlds within the narrative of the Fourth Gospel.

7.3.1. *The Witness World*

The first of two primary textual worlds of the Fourth Gospel is the world that acts as a witness to the Johannine Jesus (20:30). In this world, the indexical now (present) is fixed on the events and existents surrounding Jesus' life and death—time spent in Bethany across the Jordan (1:28–51, 10:40–2), Cana (2:1–11, 4:46–54), Capernaum (2:12, 6:17–71), Galilee (4:43–45, 7:1–9, 21:1–25), Samaria (4:4–42), Judea (3:22–4:3, 11:54–57), Bethany (11:1–53, 12:1–11), and Jerusalem (2:13–3:21, 5:1–47, 7:10–10:39, 12:12–20:31).⁶⁰ The Johannine Jesus performs signs (2:11, 23, 4:54, 20:30), offers testimony about his purpose (8:14), is often a prophet without honor (4:44), and is on a journey (7:1, 33–6, 8:14, 21, 13:3, 16:28). It is a world where people converse naturally in Aramaic (1:38, 41–2, 5:2, 9:7, 19:13, 17, 20:16), where Judas the Iscariot is a disciple (12:4), where Samaritans and Jews do not readily associate (4:9), and where Jesus is often misunderstood (2:22, 8:27, 10:6, 12:16, 20:9). Finally, it is also the world in which the Son of Man is lifted up and glorified (11:51–2, 12:23, 19:30). This textual world represents an internal, embedded, and restricted diegesis within the Gospel narrative. While this world is related to the testimony of the Beloved Disciple, it is not limited merely to this witness.⁶¹

The temporal mechanics of this world are the typical temporalities conceived by the average reader—the life and times of Jesus and the disciples. The function of this temporal world in the Gospel narrative is to testify to these events from the perspective of the Beloved Disciple and other viable witnesses.⁶² While not descriptive in the modern sense, this world nonetheless provides noteworthy details of the witness.⁶³ This world is restricted by its temporality: it knows nothing of the

⁶⁰ The passages supporting the geographies are for general reference only, as they presuppose an absolute spatiality—and the Fourth Gospel is a non-absolute Gospel in *every* dimension.

⁶¹ The witness world of the Fourth Gospel comprises a number of witnesses—existents that all speak, live and interact in that time frame; cf. Köstenberger, *Encountering John*, 32–3.

⁶² For example, the witness of John the Baptist (1:19–28).

⁶³ For example, see Jn 3:23, 5:3–5, 6:41, 8:20, 11:33–5, 44, 12:3, 13:5, 17:1, 18:3, 19:23, 34, 40, 20:5, 21:6, 11.

expulsion from the synagogue, Johannine communities, Gnosticism, or Qumran. By embedding the witness world, the Fourth Evangelist has underscored the drama and epic of the testimonies about the life and death of Jesus, presenting these events with more power and significance than a single-world narration could offer.⁶⁴ Furthermore, because the witness world is an internal, framed world, the narrative can portray the testimonies with greater literary freedom and a heterogeneity of space and time.⁶⁵ In other words, a multi-world narrative more easily allows for a coherent yet dimensional narrative construction. Finally, the temporal mechanics of this world include a compelling biographical or testimonial quality—when an internal, embedded narrative is framed by epic prologues (Section 3.1.1.), narratorial intrusions, and especially authorial *testimoniums* (Section 3.2.2.), it evokes a tangible sense of verisimilitude throughout the narrative.⁶⁶

7.3.2. *The Epic World*

The second primary textual and temporal world of the Fourth Gospel is the world that frames, dramatizes, and contextualizes the testimonies of Jesus found in the early Christian communities. In this world, the indexical now (present) is set at a time after the death and ascension of the Johannine Jesus, at a time when the early church struggled to proclaim its message to a skeptical and hostile world. The epic world is the world of the Fourth Evangelist—a world where many readers are unfamiliar with Palestinian geography (11:1, 12:1), Jewish customs (2:13, 4:9, 18:28, 19:40), and the key people in the events of Jesus' life (1:40, 3:1, 6:8, 71, 7:50, 11:2, 49, 12:1, 4, 14:22, 18:10, 14, 20:2, 24, 21:20), but comfortable with Greek (1:38, 1:41–2, 5:2, 9:7, 19:13, 19:17, 20:16, 21:24–5). In this world, the remaining disciples now understand (2:22, 12:16, 20:9); they are familiar with the legends of John the Baptist (3:24) and Judas (6:64, 71, 12:4, 6), and the coming of the Holy Spirit (7:39, cf. 20:22). This world grasps the point of Jesus' life and death (6:6, 64, 7:30, 39, 8:20, 11:5, 12:33, 13:1, 3, 11, 28, 18:9, 32), can relate these events to the Jewish scriptures (1:23, 2:17, 12:15, 38–41, 19:24, 28, 36–7), and perceives it all on several levels

⁶⁴ Nelles, *Frameworks*, 138.

⁶⁵ Cf. Ronen, *Possible Worlds*, 188.

⁶⁶ Robyn R. Warhol, "Toward a Theory of the Engaging Narrator: Earnest Interventions in Gaskell, Stowe, and Eliot," *PMLA* 101:5 (1986): 814; and Bal, *Narratology*, 46.

(1:1–18, 2:11, 4:54, 11:51–2, 13:2, 27, 19:35–7, 20:30–1). Finally, this world finds some aspects unchanged from the witness world: numerous customs and truths (4:9, 44),⁶⁷ and the general value of most existents. All in all, the epic world is a framing and restricted diegesis granting a final form to the witness of the Fourth Gospel. It is the world of the Fourth Evangelist.

In contrast to the mechanics of the witness world, the temporal mechanics of the epic world are a part of the temporalities most sought by critics. The epic world of the Evangelist is the arguably “primary discourse” of the narrative,⁶⁸ and is locatable around the edges of the narrative and its various dimensions,⁶⁹ as well as in the narratorial intrusions. When the epic world intrudes upon the witness world, these intrusions frame the witness world, granting form, design and coherence to the embedded testimonies (Section 5.2.1.).⁷⁰ Furthermore, when the Fourth Gospel shifts from an internal witness to the external Evangelist, the temporal transition establishes a common denominator with the temporal position of the reader against the temporal world of the witness.⁷¹ Similar to the witness world, temporal position and context restricts the epic world—this world is not one that walks and talks with Jesus, the disciples, or the Jews.

Finally, the most critical function of the epic world is to assist the witness world in overcoming its innate temporal restrictions and limitations. The epic world as a framing world allows the testimonies surrounding the life of the Johannine Jesus to be presented in a non-absolute, discontinuous, and heterogeneous manner but still retain coherence and meaning.⁷² When the epic world intrudes, it fills in and smoothes

⁶⁷ As well as the arguments from the case study below; Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 221; and contra Barrett, *Gospel According to St. John*, 107.

⁶⁸ Ironically, many Johannine critics place brackets around the intrusions from the epic world, when in fact the brackets belong around the embedded, witness world (though linear brackets would be a poor choice to delineate these worlds); see Mieke Bal and Eve Tavor, “Notes on Narrative Embedding,” *PT* 2:2 (1981): 54; and cf. Füredi, “A Structural Model,” 751.

⁶⁹ For example, see Jn 1:1–19a, 21:24–5 and Jn 2:11, 4:43–45, 19:35–37, respectively; especially with narratives that possess prologues and epilogues, see Frow, “Literary Frame,” 334.

⁷⁰ Gribble, “Interventions,” 52–4; Fajardo, “Frame,” 2; cf. Javitch, “Narrative Discontinuity,” 62; and Frow, “Literary Frame,” 335.

⁷¹ Uri Margolin, “Shifted,” *Narrative* 9:2 (2001): 196.

⁷² Gribble, “Interventions,” 49.

out the discontinuities that occur across narrative dimensions.⁷³ Most critically, however, the epic world of the Evangelist overcomes the limitations of the witness world by adding a developed diachronic to the narrative—without the epic world, the non-absolute dimensionality of testimonies about the events surrounding the life of the Johannine Jesus would merely be an annal or chronicle without theology, Christology, finality or purpose.⁷⁴ Unfortunately for the modern critic, all of this comes at a cost: in most narratives, it is impossible to keep these possible, temporal worlds from colliding—an issue we will consider in the next section.

7.4. THE FUNCTION OF METALEPSIS IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

Instead of possessing two pure, integral and distinct worlds, the Fourth Gospel comprises several worlds—most notably the witness and epic worlds—that are conflated, fractional and entangled. We can refer to the conflation of multiple diegetic worlds that exists in the Fourth Gospel as *metalepsis*. This phenomenon arises in narrative when there is interaction between existents, events, temporalities or spaces that naturally occur on separate narrative worlds.⁷⁵ The reason that narrative worlds intermingle and cause textual and temporal conflation is that multiple narrative worlds are highly unstable.⁷⁶ These worlds define and segregate finite temporalities that often need to reference each other, and in many cases destroys an indexical ‘now’ of the narrative.⁷⁷ The deconstruction of worlds transpires at an ontological boundary within the narrative, and this transgression leads to a mixing of ontologies that

⁷³ See Section 7.2.2.; and Wolfgang Iser, “Indeterminacy and Reader’s Response in Prose Fiction,” in *Aspects of Narrative: Selected Papers from the English Institute* (ed. J. Hillis Miller; New York: Columbia University, 1971), 18.

⁷⁴ As an example, while I could rewrite the story of the Johannine Jesus from a 21st century perspective with a developed theology and articulated Christology (regardless of genre), it would not have a witness-type quality unless I discovered and inserted new testimonies or added them rhetorically as a literary device (in both cases evoking more than one possible world).

⁷⁵ David Herman defines metalepsis as “the interplay of situations, characters or events occupying diegetic levels that are *prima facie* distinct”; see David Herman, “Toward a Formal Description of Narrative Metalepsis,” *JLS* 26:2 (1997): 132.

⁷⁶ Richardson, *Narrative Dynamics*, 330.

⁷⁷ Herman, “Narrative Metalepsis,” 132; and Suzanne Fleischman, “Discourse as Space/Discourse as Time: Reflections on the Metalanguage of Spoken and Written Discourse,” *JP* 16 (1991): 298.

makes referentiality (with the actual world) difficult.⁷⁸ In fact, it is significant to note that this ontological transgression that lacks verisimilitude is often a narrative device for historiographical verisimilitude.⁷⁹ Because of the problem of referentiality, most multiworld narratives experience at least minor metaleptic conflation as a minimum.⁸⁰ There are many ancient narratives where the phenomenon is notable, the most famous example being Virgil's *Aeneid*.⁸¹

Perhaps the most common example of metalepsis in narrative occurs when a narrator intrudes upon another world being narrated. In general, narratorial metalepsis arises most often when an omniscient or external narrator begins to interact directly with the events being narrated, especially if the narrator is separated in space and time from these events. Examples of this include narrators that interfere by either illuminating or obstructing the events narrated,⁸² actors or existents that invade the narratorial diegesis,⁸³ vague or undefined transitions in focalization,⁸⁴ or perhaps the general mimetic paradox of narrating a narration of events that is, in fact, narrated.⁸⁵ Therefore, metalepsis may occur with any existent and in any direction or in any world—a simple fact that can become quite complex in a narrative with entangled diegeses.⁸⁶ What is worse, any of the multiple worlds of entangled metaleptic narratives can carry-over, affecting and infecting the worlds around them,⁸⁷ through indefinite focalization, overlap,⁸⁸ transitional indexicals,⁸⁹ lexical

⁷⁸ For example, see Herman, "Narrative Metalepsis," 133; Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 236; Füredy, "A Structural Model," 758; Ashline, "Impossible Fictions," 217; and Heise, *Chronoschisms*, 40.

⁷⁹ Monika Fludernik, "The Diachronization of Narratology," *Narrative* 11:3 (2003): 339.

⁸⁰ Nelles, *Frameworks*, 157.

⁸¹ Ibid., 154; furthermore, beyond the Fourth Gospel and the *Aeneid*, metalepsis is observable in the *Metamorphoses* of Lucius Apuleius (c. AD 123–after 170); see below.

⁸² For example, metaleptic illumination exists in the Fourth Gospel, whereas we can see metaleptic obstructionism in the *Metamorphoses*; see Ken Dowden, "Apuleius and the Art of Narration," *CQ* 32:2 (1982): 431.

⁸³ As is the case with many of the actors in the Homeric epics; see Irene J. F. de Jonge, "Iliad 1.366–392: A Mirror Story," *Arethusa* 18:1 (1985): 9.

⁸⁴ For example, in *Leucippe and Clitophon* by Achilles Tatius (c. early 2nd century AD); see Steve Nimis, "Memory and Description in the Ancient Novel," *Arethusa* 31:1 (1998): 115; and cf. Ronen, *Possible Worlds*, 191.

⁸⁵ Fludernik, "Diachronization," 340; and Herman, "Narrative Metalepsis," 134.

⁸⁶ Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 235.

⁸⁷ Douglas R. Hofstadter, *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 184–5.

⁸⁸ Fowler, "Second Thoughts on Closure," 20.

⁸⁹ Bal, *Narratology*, 48.

repetition, and the creation of potential virtual worlds.⁹⁰ As a result, many textual discontinuities, aporias and conundrums are the result of metalepsis in narrative.

Narratorial intrusion is the primary contributor to metalepsis in the Fourth Gospel. In the Gospel narrative, there is one external narrator that exists across the conflation of two primary textual and temporal worlds. In other words, the narrator of the Fourth Gospel speaks into two worlds: the world of the testimonies about the Johannine Jesus and the world of the early Christian communities for whom the life of Jesus is the foundational epic. While the narrator is one of the devices that bridges the gap between these two worlds, the narrator is also primarily responsible for irrevocably conflating these two worlds as well. Consequently, the heterogeneous mixing of these two temporal worlds results in a conflicted, conflated narrative making trans-world referentiality extremely problematic. In the end, glimpses of the amalgamation of temporal worlds in the Fourth Gospel come through a variety of narrative mechanics.

The first example of metaleptic blending in the Fourth Gospel is in *statements with indefinite temporalities*.⁹¹ In many cases, indefinite temporalities arise in the well-known asides of the Gospel.⁹² However, indefinite temporalities are far more entrenched than this; a conspicuous example is the disciples who “remembered” (Εμνήσθησαν) the words from Scripture (2:17; cf. Ps 69:9). In this situation, it is unclear in which temporal and textual world these remembrances belong.⁹³ Indefinite temporalities are common anomalies in conflated worlds.⁹⁴ A second example of trans-world amalgamation in the Gospel is the use of *temporally-indefinite stage directions* by the narrator that appear in the witness

⁹⁰ Herman, “Narrative Metalepsis,” 132, 135.

⁹¹ For example, see Jn 2:17, 4:25, 10:41, 12:42–3, 19:27, 35, 21:23.

⁹² For example, in Jn 19:35 the time and situation of the testimony and its validity is indefinite—the testimony and validation mentioned in this verse are probably a part of the witness world but perhaps also the epic world as well; see Barrett, *Gospel According to St. John*, 463.

⁹³ For example, see Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 1:115; Carson, *Gospel According to John*, 180; Frey, *Eschatologie II*, 163; Tovey, *Narrative Art*, 234; cf. Schnackenburg, *Gospel According to John*, 1:347–8; Hoskyns, *Fourth Gospel*, 194; and contra monotemporal arguments including Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 124; Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology*, 93, 172; Haenchen, *John*, 1:184; and Laney, *John*, 71.

⁹⁴ Ancient narratives such as those by Thucydides contain numerous similar temporal anomalies; see Gribble, “Interventions,” 61; and Möller and Luraghi, “Time in the Writing of History,” 14.

world.⁹⁵ In many of these cases, it is difficult to discern whether these are merely annalistic conjunctions or external, epic explanations of narrative progression. Another close example of this is the Gospel's usage of *omniscient and external perspectives* among the existents.⁹⁶ Clearly, the projection of perspective into narrative existents can only be performed from a dissimilar temporal vantage point—one requiring a separate diegetic level due to the testimonial device within the Fourth Gospel.

A fourth example of metalepsis between worlds in the Fourth Gospel is the *repetition of lexical particulars* across worlds. When considering multiple diegeses in the same narrative, conventional wisdom suggests that language and syntax would remain relatively the same across worlds; variances would occur in the areas of stylistics or semantics.⁹⁷ However, when a narrative employs a word or phrase of narrative value repeatedly across diegetic domains, this trans-world lexical repetition sharply intermingles the adjacent textual and temporal worlds. The greater the semantic value of the repetition, the stronger the pull between worlds.⁹⁸ One of the clearest examples of particular lexical repetition across the two primary temporal worlds of the Fourth Gospel is the use of “sign” (σημεῖον). The Johannine text employs σημεῖον to articulate a similar concept in both the epic world (2:11, 4:54, 20:30) and the witness world (2:18, 23, 3:2, 4:48, 6:14, 26, 30, 9:16, 11:47, 12:18), and in fact even in narrative segments with indefinite or alternative temporalities (6:2, 7:31, 10:41, 12:37). The Gospel's use of trans-world lexical repetitions disrupts the ontological boundaries between the two temporal worlds and prohibits most attempts at diegetic partitioning.⁹⁹

The final example of diegetic heterogeneity in the Johannine Gospel is the possibility of *definite articles of familiarity*. In most narrative situations, these articles are extremely difficult to pinpoint and concretely

⁹⁵ For example, see Jn 1:28, 2:1–2, 23, 3:1, 4:41, 45–6, 5:2, 9, 16, 6:2, 22, 7:1, 8:59, 10:41–2, 11:1, 18–9, 45, 12:1–2, 9, 18:2, 19:31.

⁹⁶ For potential examples, see Jn 2:24–5, 4:41, 44, 5:16, 6:6, 15, 7:1, 13, 30–1, 8:19, 27, 30, 9:18, 22, 10:19, 42, 11:45, 51–2, 12:6, 10–1, 37, 42–3, 13:1, 3, 11, 18:4, 19:27–8, 38, 20:8—although note that the issue is not Jesus' knowledge or omniscience, but the narrator's knowledge or omniscience about Jesus' knowledge.

⁹⁷ Herman, “Narrative Metalepsis,” 143–4.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 150.

⁹⁹ What is more, many of the ‘thematic’ lexical particulars of the Gospel spoil the purity of the witness and epic worlds; for several abbreviated examples, consider “disciple” (μαθητής) in Jn 1:35, 3:25, 13:22 and 2:22, 20:30, 21:24 (and 2:17, 21:23), “Christ” (Χριστός) in 3:28, 12:34 and 1:17, 20:31 (and 4:25), and “witness” (μαρτύριον) in 3:11, 8:13 and 1:7, 21:24, respectively.

categorize, but they do hint at some of the deepest levels of trans-world integration. In essence, the use of familiar articles are implicit misstatements by the narrator revealing an unsubstantiated relationship with the stated object—generally a common, ordinary item (noun). Another way of stating this concept is that in a typical segment of narrated discourse,¹⁰⁰ a newly-introduced mundane item *generally* enters the discourse with the non-possessive, non-familiar indefinite article, and only later, upon second or third usage, acquires the more familiar definite article.¹⁰¹ Of course, ‘generally’ will be highly dependent upon context, stylistics and usage. Nevertheless, metaleptic narratives such as the Fourth Gospel often betray the conflation of diegetic worlds in these temporal lapses by the narrator.¹⁰² We will consider several of these inadvertent articles of familiarity in the case study below.

As a result of these conflations, the two temporal worlds of the Fourth Gospel are inexorably and inextricably fused—it is impossible to divorce the witness and the epic in the Johannine text.¹⁰³ In fact, due to the disruption between the ontological boundaries of these two worlds, it is impossible to identify a temporal indexical from which one can disseminate the various temporalities in the Gospel—there is no foundational world or temporality from which to base an exploration.¹⁰⁴ What is more, without the possession of a distinctive or absolute temporal indexical, coupled with the innate restrictions on narrative temporality and referentiality, it is impossible to establish an absolute,

¹⁰⁰ In this case, I am limiting a ‘typical segment’ to one of similar genre, narrativity and style as those found in the Fourth Gospel.

¹⁰¹ For example, consider the following narrative: “Richard went to the supermarket and bought a bag of yams before returning home.” In this narrative, one expects the ‘bag of yams’ to be introduced by an indefinite article, ‘a bag of yams.’ At the same time, if the narrative introduced the bag of yams (and note already my implicit and necessary usage of the definite article to define which bag), as ‘the’ bag of yams, the reader would rightfully wonder which bag of yams it was that the narrator and/or Richard was familiar with: “Richard went to the supermarket and bought the bag of yams before returning home” is a narrative that signals to the reader that there is something more or special about ‘the bag.’ As a final note, I can more easily get away with introducing ‘supermarket’ as ‘the supermarket,’ even if only because the average English reader will much more quickly grasp the concept that there might be ‘a supermarket’ that is ‘the supermarket,’ shared between Richard and the narrator, without dwelling on the significance of ‘the’ supermarket.

¹⁰² Nelles, *Frameworks*, 52.

¹⁰³ Xavier Léon-Dufour, *The Gospels and the Jesus of History* (trans. and ed. John McHugh; London: Collins, 1968), 106; cf. Margolin, “Shifted,” 197; and contra Martyn, *History & Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 18.

¹⁰⁴ Herman, “Narrative Metalepsis,” 135.

trans-world reference within the Johannine narrative.¹⁰⁵ The result has sobering implications for literary redaction-oriented attempts at discerning levels or sources within the text.¹⁰⁶ In the end, critics base their literary theories of redaction on suspected temporal progressions of a text, but these progressions can never be defined in a text such as the Fourth Gospel due to the temporal restrictions on trans-world references in a metaleptic narrative.¹⁰⁷

CASE STUDY—METALEPSIS—JOHN 1:48–50/21:3

One of the most deeply-rooted signs of metalepsis in a multi-world narrative is the unintentional use of a definite article of familiarity. Because the usage is almost always an unintended consequence of the narrative process, in most cases the Fourth Gospel follows an expected course: mundane items or common nouns are first introduced with the indefinite article (subject to context), with subsequent usages taking the definite article (again, subject to context). Several clear examples of this occur in the story of the sign at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. First, the Fourth Evangelist reveals that there was “a wedding” (γάμος) in Cana (2:1), introduced without placement or description. On subsequent mentions of “the wedding” (τὸν γάμον) (2:2; cf. 2:3^{N*}), the Evangelist switches to the definite article due to established familiarity.¹⁰⁸ In the same way, the narrative introduces “water” (ὕδατος) indefinitely (2:7), only later to establish familiarity and contextualization with “the water” (τὸ ὕδωρ) (2:9, and especially the later-in-narrative 4:46). It is clear that when a narrative establishes and contextualizes an object, familiarity as a general rule is confirmed through the usage of the definite article.

¹⁰⁵ Of course, my discussion is limited in scope because I have only addressed the two primary textual worlds in the Fourth Gospel; however, if one were to consider the referentiality of these worlds in relation to the indefinite and alternative temporalities in the Gospel, the actual world (AW), and other possible worlds (the Synoptic Gospels), the complexity of the discussion increases exponentially and the possibility of a pure, trans-world referentiality decreases exponentially; cf. Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 236.

¹⁰⁶ Note that external evidences, such as textual criticism, would allow viable redaction theories because they bring another temporal world into the discussion suitable for some referentiality.

¹⁰⁷ Critics have often raised the issue of redactional levels in ancient, metaleptic narratives such as those by Thucydides, with equally problematic results; see Gribble, “Interventions,” 41.

¹⁰⁸ Note that in the previous sentences, I introduced the wedding as ‘the’ wedding since that made the most sense contextually because I am assuming readers will be familiar with the story.

Examples of a deeply-rooted metalepsis in the Fourth Gospel occur on two levels. First, there are culturally-based articles of familiarity that, to a degree, cross world boundaries. As a lucid example, the Gospel never introduces “the temple” (τό ἱερόν) in Jerusalem to the reader as it does most other existents and objects; but because of the inadvertent assumption of the Evangelist, the temple is always familiarized in the Gospel.¹⁰⁹ Other examples of this type of metalepsis include references to “the prophet” (ὁ προφήτης),¹¹⁰ “the serpent” (ὁ ὄφις) (3:14), “the manna” (τό μάννα) (6:31, 49), and perhaps “the cross” (ὁ σταυρός) (19:17, 19, 25, 31).¹¹¹ These instances of culturally-based metalepsis conflate the Gospel worlds, making it impossible to discern whether these cultural assumptions are based in the witness or the epic world.

The most incisive instances of deeply-rooted metalepsis in the Fourth Gospel transpire when common, mundane objects are familiarized without any apparent contextual, cultural or linguistic reason. In the story of the calling of Nathaniel, the Johannine Jesus refers in his vision to “the fig tree” (ἡ συκῆ) as the previous location for Nathaniel (1:48, 50).¹¹² While it is possible that Jesus employs the definite article to emphasize his clairvoyance to Nathaniel,¹¹³ it is equally possible that this is an example of ingrained metaleptic familiarity expressed in the narrative dynamic.¹¹⁴ Finally, perhaps the best example is the conflated

¹⁰⁹ For example, see Jn 2:14–5, 5:14, 7:14, 28, [8:2], 20, 59, 10:23, 11:56, 18:20; as well as the complimentary “the temple” (ὁ ναός) (perhaps ‘sanctuary’; U. Borse, “ἱερόν,” *EDNT*, 2:175) in 2:19–21; excepting general statements (such as in Hoskyns, *Fourth Gospel*, 49) there is little discussion on this assumption, but see Keener, *Gospel of John*, 1:519; and contra a minimalist approach in Haenchen, *John*, 1:182.

¹¹⁰ See Jn 1:21, 25, 6:14, 7:40, 52^{p66}, cf. 1:45, 6:45, 8:52–3; interestingly, this is contrasted with general references to ‘a’ prophet (4:19, 44, 9:17) when there is not reference made to the Biblical allusion (Dt 18:15–18; cf. 1 Macc 4:46, 14:41; 4QTest 5, 1QS 9:10–1)—the term is defined by contextualization and the use of the familiar definite article; see Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 132, 221; Witherington, *John’s Wisdom*, 65; cf. Wilckens, *Evangelium*, 137; Schnackenburg, *Gospel According to John*, 2:161; Keener, *Gospel of John*, 1:735; and Carson, *Gospel According to John*, 332.

¹¹¹ There is the possibility of contextual introduction with ὁ σταυρός in Jn 19:6, 10, 15, 16.

¹¹² We can agree with Brown who says the search for details, symbols or metaphors for the fig tree are “pure speculation”; see Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 1:83; as well as Kysar, *John*, 41; contra Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, 7.21; Keil, *Johannesevangelium*, 42; and cf. Ferdinand Hahn, “Die Jüngerberufung Joh. 1, 35–51,” in *Neues Testament und Kirche: Für Rudolf Schnackenburg* (ed. Joachim Gnllka; Freiburg: Herder, 1974), 187–88.

¹¹³ C. K. Barrett argues a landmark is needed, though this idea does not negate trans-world conflation; see Barrett, *Gospel According to St. John*, 154; and C. F. D. Moule, “A Note on ‘Under the Fig-Tree’ in John 1:48, 50,” *JTS* 5:2 (1954): 211.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Newman and Nida, *Handbook*, 49.

reference to “the boat” (τό πλοῖον) in the final resurrection appearance in the narrative (21:3, 6). In this instance, the narrative offers no reason for the definite article to introduce the object.¹¹⁵ Instead, the Evangelist employs the definite article inadvertently, signaling a relationship between an object in the witness world and the narration in the epic world. While it is impossible to discern the type or nature of the relationship,¹¹⁶ it is sufficient enough to bring down the ontological boundaries between narrative worlds.

7.5. AFTERWORD: RESTRICTIVE

There is a long-held belief that narrative exerts an incredible power to glimpse other worlds, whether one of history or fiction, but against this notion is the fact that the view into other possible worlds is always a restricted one. One of the most critical restrictions on narrative is its temporality; narratives cannot overcome their innate temporal limitations and instead must discover and implement a variety of temporal mechanics that allow for the fullness of truth in time. In this chapter, we considered the restrictive nature of narrative temporality in the Fourth Gospel as well as one of the primary mechanics that overcomes these restrictions: the use of multiple possible worlds. Furthermore, I demonstrated that the Fourth Gospel possesses two primary temporal worlds that relate through metalepsis. In fact, the metaleptic conflation of these two Johannine worlds exists on the deepest levels of narrativity and cannot be disentangled by the modern reader.

This chapter represents an original inquiry into the function of narrative restrictions in ancient, non-absolute narratives, and posits a unique solution to the problem of referentiality through multiple possible temporal worlds. In many cases, modern critics have subjected ancient narratives such as the Fourth Gospel to unwieldy and non-evidential theories of redaction or origins due to a lack of understanding of the

¹¹⁵ Aside from metalepsis, two improbable possibilities exist: first, the boat is the same boat as in Jn 6:17f., but the context in the first story argues against this; and second, the boat is borrowed from the Synoptic tradition—but this would be trans-world metalepsis on a much grander scale; Brown argues against this possibility; see Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 2:1069.

¹¹⁶ Leon Morris states that “they embarked in “the” (not “a”) boat, but there is no way of knowing what this means. John evidently had the details clear in his mind, but we cannot enter into his knowledge”; see Morris, *Gospel*, 862; and cf. Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 2:1069.

relative and non-absolute construction of narrative—a construction that bends standardized, modern rules of historiographical referentiality.¹¹⁷ A reconsideration of narrative referentiality opens the door to several possibilities. First, narrative framing and referentiality is absolutely critical to a well-informed interpretation of the Gospel; readings with a homogenized perspective or artificial redactions only do damage to the text.¹¹⁸ This includes not only the implied reader but also the role of the Gospel in relation to actual, modern readers. Second, in this chapter, I chose to consider the function of possible worlds, but we barely scratched the surface of epistemological knowledge across narrative worlds; I believe we need further research into more exacting methods of trans-world referentiality for the Fourth Gospel as well as other Biblical narratives. Finally, I feel further research into narrative restrictions can represent the beginning of a collusion between narrative-critical methods and traditional historical-critical methods searching for the various levels and the *Sitz im Leben* of the Fourth Gospel.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Gribble, “Interventions,” 41.

¹¹⁸ Richardson, *Narrative Dynamics*, 2.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

Wakati ni wa Bwana.

—Swahili expression

In his book, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, N. T. Wright argues, “It is prudent to hold back from too hasty a judgment on what is actually possible and what is not in the space-time universe. There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in post-Enlightenment philosophy.”¹ This statement rings true for any evaluation of the Fourth Gospel, especially one concerned with the temporal mechanics of the narrative text. For centuries, the Johannine Gospel has been the source of study, speculation and chagrin over its unique sense of time and structure. This has been especially true in the modern era, where our want for neat and consistent narrative architectures, and our “desire for a clear outline may arise from our need to simplify and control the complexities of narrative.”² Unlike ideal modern narratives, however, the Fourth Gospel is a turbulent text, one that is not easily confined or controlled. In the end, the time has come to allow the Gospel’s intricate, dimensional, and heterogeneous sense of time to overcome the rigid and limiting chronologies of the Enlightenment project.³

Throughout the pages of this work, I have posited an innovative approach to discerning the temporal mechanics of the Fourth Gospel. We started by building a foundation for this study on the definition and function of narrative in contemporary applications, and challenging incorrect assumptions about narrative criticism applied to Biblical narratives. Upon this foundation, we considered several of the many different and variegated conceptions of time, each of which is capable of producing narrative temporalities, as well as studies about those narrative temporalities. In the end, one of our goals was to use a

¹ N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1997), 187.

² Tannehill, “Beginning,” 186.

³ Hall, “Times,” 131.

conception of time easily understood by the modern reader, but also one that would allow us to approximate and return to the sense of temporality in the ancient world. In this regard, we demonstrated that the temporality of the Theory of Relativity could serve this purpose.⁴ Furthermore, in order to develop a paradigm to explore the function of time in the narrative of the Fourth Gospel, I developed five aspects of the modern physics paradigm of time into a workable narrative theory of temporality.

We discovered early on that the Fourth Gospel, being a narrative, occupies a finite universe of events and existents, and will never answer many of the questions posed by positivism. This finite narrative has significant interpretive keys within the prologue and epilogue of the Gospel, mostly obscured by the implicit assumptions of modern critics who miss the critical and singular importances of the aperture and closures of texts in their concern for the eternality of absolute form and design. The events and times that exist between the prologue and epilogue of the Fourth Gospel cannot be aligned with an absolute chronology, but exist as discrete yet relatable dimensions across the movement of the text. Because of the design of the Evangelist, the narrative succeeds in not only being held together as a grouping of textual dimensions encapsulated within a narrative but also being coherent to the average reader. We have found that coherence is granted across the temporal dimensions of the text, and also within and across the individual events arranged throughout the complete narrative constellation of the text—a constellation that will never be fully beheld with the lens of quasi-Kantian or quasi-Newtonian temporalities. In fact, it is these events and non-events, or discontinuities, that on the local level actually shape, determine, and ultimately warp the non-absolute Gospel into a coherent, meaningful and powerful story of the life of the Johannine Jesus. Indeed, the meaningfulness of the story is possible because a reader may trace the shortest line between the Gospel's aperture and closure along the narrative geodesic, across worlds but into the 'point' of the story. As a result, when we pull back the shades on the narrative configuration of the Fourth Gospel, and recognize the complex molecularity of the text, we begin to discern that there

⁴ Bermejo-Barrera, "Explicating the Past," 1.

are in fact two, distinct temporal worlds that bleed into the Johannine narrative universe.

Over the course of this study, we have seen that an innovative approach to discerning the temporal mechanics of the Fourth Gospel has proven useful in addressing questions that have long resisted answers—we have brought to light possibilities that have not always before been considered possibilities. Nevertheless, any study that attempts innovation is not without its detractors. Perhaps the most ardent criticism of this present work will be that this study is *too* innovative—that the modern physics paradigm of time is unrelatable to the real world, to the ancient world, or to narrative. After all, one can argue, Albert Einstein and the 20th century physicists and mathematicians who developed and articulated the Theory of Relativity did so to answer questions of cosmological origins and to discern velocities approaching the speed of light—not to apply to the Fourth Gospel. This is true. However, if truth *is* told, this study is actually not that innovative for one simple reason: *the application of a foreign paradigm of time has already been applied to the Fourth Gospel innumerable times*. With the advent of the Enlightenment, the development of an absolute time line allowed early modern Gospel critics to appropriate the strict linear time of the burgeoning studies of the physical world and apply it—extraordinarily—to narratives that were never created for such a paradigm. For this reason, *just as this work attempts to use an idea from a new conception of time introduced to the world by the physical sciences, so too does the majority of biblical scholarship employ an idea from a new conception of time introduced to the world by the physical sciences—just the physical sciences of the 17th century*.⁵ Modern chronology, based on an absolute time-line, was cutting edge science in the 17th century, and the appropriation of this concept of time for an analysis of the temporal mechanics of the Fourth Gospel would have seemed as unusual to some readers in that time period as the idea of applying the temporality of the modern physics conception of time will seem to some readers in this age. In the end, we recognize that the concept of an absolute chronology has been of immeasurable benefit to the study of narrative, historiography, and Gospel, just as

⁵ This is to say nothing of any other approaches to time that have been (usually implicitly) applied to the Fourth Gospel without question—Kantian, existential, and many, many more.

other conceptions of time—such as the modern physics paradigm—may also be of benefit one day. Yet time will continue to pass, and all the while, our understanding of time, narrative, and Gospel will never be complete,⁶ until we all live happily ever after.

⁶ Iain M. MacKenzie, *The Anachronism of Time: A Theological Study into the Nature of Time* (Norwich: Canterbury, 1994), 4.

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